

The Perennial Way

Vol. III

T H E

P E R E N N I A L

W A Y

Vol. III

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Collected wisdom

“The conduct of a Vajrayana adept is likely to be unorthodox; intent upon employing everything in life as a means to achievement, he does not except such animal processes as sleeping, eating, excreting and (if he is not a monk) sexual intercourse. The energy of passions and desires must be yoked, not wasted. Every act of body, speech and mind, every circumstance, every sensation, every dream can be turned to good account. This aspect of Tantric Buddhism has led to the great error of confounding it with libertinism. Though all things are employed as means, they must be rightly used and their right use is far removed from sensual gratification.”

“The teaching that such a tremendous length of time is required to destroy these obstructions inspires yogis to develop a willingness for long-term practice; they imagine practically limitless future lives involving practice of the six perfections. Bodhisattvas become like a mother holding her sole sweet baby who kicks her, pulls her hair, and sticks a finger in her eye. She is patient, knowing how long her task will take. In the same way, Bodhisattvas are willing to spend an eon to achieve a slight improvement in one sentient being.”

“Tantra yoga means employing all aspects of who you are in order to move towards your ultimate destination.”

“It seems entirely reasonable to suppose that the very profound rest which occurs during transcendental meditation is also necessary to the organism, and that lack of this rest is responsible for the accumulation of stress and, ultimately, much mental and physical ill-health.”

“The enhanced mental capacity and creativity and the release from anxiety which meditators report are presumably the psychological counterparts of this release of physical tension. What one experiences is that the mind is no longer caught up in futile thoughts – in neuroses, in fact – but is free to attend to what matters.”

“The process of infusion depends (...) on alternation between the silence of meditation and the movement of activity; both sides of our nature, Mary and Martha, have to be fulfilled. (...) Maharishi therefore insists that meditators should act in the world without trying to maintain the silence of meditation, for it is precisely by passing from one state to the other – from silence to activity and back again – that one becomes accustomed to both; and more than that, one begins to maintain the state of pure awareness along with activity.”

“Yoga is no less than the stable state of consciousness.”

“A yogi’s action goes beyond the axis of good and evil. A yogi does all actions just for the sake of refining the actions skillfully, without any other motivation, and remains a witness to action.”

“Wir müssen uns zu einem Leben beständiger Arbeit nach höherer Richtung hin entschliessen. Die Saumseligen oder diejenigen, welche nach Angenehmem ausgehen, mögen die Sache der Konzentrationsausbildung liegen lassen und sich mit dem angenehmen Pfad zufrieden geben, welcher für jene abgesteckt ist, die ‘Gott fürchten und den Körper ehren’. Ungeheure Gebiete der Forschung und der Experimente müssen durchschritten werden; ungeahnten Gefahren und unbekannten Kräften muss entgegengetreten werden, die alle zu besiegen sind. Denn in diesem Kampfe wird weder um Pardon gebeten, noch ein solcher gewährt. Grosse Schätze der Erkenntnis müssen aufgefunden und festgehalten werden. Das Himmelreich wird nicht auf eine Anfrage hin erlangt, es muss mit Gewalt genommen werden. Der einzige Weg, mittels welchen wir den Willen und die Macht zum Auffinden und Festhalten erwerben können, besteht einerseits in der Erlangung der Tugenden und andererseits in dem genauesten Verständnis unserer eigenen Natur. Eines Tages werden wir einzusehen beginnen, warum nicht ein einziger auftauchender Gedanke übersehen werden, kein einziger aufblitzender Eindruck unbeachtet bleiben darf. Wir begreifen wohl, dass dies keine einfache Aufgabe ist, es ist eine riesige Arbeit. Hat man schon darüber nachgedacht, dass das bloss Anschauen eines Bildes, oder ein einziges, im Gewühl der Welt dahingesprochenes Wort die Grundlage für einen Traum geben kann, welcher die ganze Nacht vergiftet und am nächsten Tage das Gehirn neuerdings beeinflusst? Jede Handlung, jedes Wort und jede Situation muss geprüft werden. Hat man eines übersehen, dann hat man sich am nächsten Morgen beim Erwachen jedes Wort und jede Situation des vorhergehenden Tages ins Gedächtnis zurückzurufen und gleich dem Astronomen im Raum nach dem Verlorenen zu suchen. Und auch ohne einen solchen speziellen Grund muss man lernen befähigt zu werden, in vergangene Tage zurückzugehen, um alles sorgfältig und im Detail zu überschauen, was sich zugetragen hat und was man durch das Gehirn passieren liess. Ist dies eine leichte Sache?”

Willy Adelman-Huttula

“That which normally takes a long time to be accomplished can be shortened by the intensity of the action, says the Yogi. (...) That is the ideal of the Yogi; the whole science of Yoga is directed to that end, to teach men how to shorten the time by adding power, how to intensify the power of assimilation, and thereby shorten the time for reaching perfection, instead of slowly advancing from point to point, and waiting until the whole human race has come out, and become perfect. All the great prophets, saints, and seers, of the world, what are they? In that one span of life they lived the whole life of humanity, bridged the whole length of time that it will take ordinary humanity to come to the state of perfection. In this life they perfect themselves; they have no thought for anything else, breathe for nothing else, never live for a moment for any other idea, and thus the way is shortened for them. This is what is meant by concentration, intensifying the action or assimilation, and thus shortening the time; and Raja Yoga is the science which teaches us how to gain the power of concentration.”

“Spiritual knowledge is the only thing that can destroy our miseries forever; any other knowledge removes wants only for a time. It is only with the knowledge of the Spirit that the root cause of want is destroyed forever; so helping man spiritually is the highest help that can be given him.”

“(…) work incessantly, but let not a ripple conquer the mind. Work as if you were a stranger in this land, a sojourner; work incessantly, but do not bind yourselves. (….) This world is not our habitation, it is only one of the many stages through which we are passing. (….) The whole of nature is for the soul, not the soul for nature. The very reason of nature’s existence is for the education of the soul; it has no other meaning; it is there because the soul must have knowledge, and through knowledge free itself. (….) The whole gist of this teaching is that you should work like a master and not as a slave. (….) Work through freedom! Work through love! (….) when we ourselves work for the things of the world as slaves, there can be no love in us, and our work is not true work. (….) Selfish work is a slave’s work.”

“Those that take a nibble here and a nibble there will never attain anything. Those who really want to be yogis must give up, once for all, this nibbling at things. Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life – think of it, dream of it, live on that idea.”

“No one is ever really taught by another; each of us has to teach himself. The external teacher offers only the suggestion, which arouses the internal teacher, who helps us to understand things.”

“The ideal man is he who, in the midst of the greatest silence and solitude, finds the intensest activity, and in the midst of the intensest activity finds the silence and solitude of the desert. He has learnt the secret of restraint, he has controlled himself. He goes through the streets of a big city with all its traffic, and his mind is as calm as if he were in a cave, where not a sound could reach him; and he is intensely working all the time. That is the ideal of Karma-yoga, and if you have attained to that you have really learnt the secret of work.”

“You have to grow from the inside out. None can teach you, none can make you spiritual. There is no other teacher but your own soul.”

“Arise, awake, stop not till the goal is reached.”

Swami Vivekananda

“The real spiritual progress of the aspirant is measured by the extent to which he achieves inner tranquility.”

Swami Sivananda

"Meditation is the dissolution of thoughts in external awareness or pure consciousness without objectification, knowing without thinking, merging finitude in infinity."

Voltaire

"Thoroughly unprepared, we take the step into the afternoon of life. Worse still, we take this step with the false presupposition that our truths and ideals will serve us as hitherto. But we cannot live the afternoon of life according to the program of life's morning, for what was great in the morning will be little at evening, and what in the morning was true, at evening will have become a lie."

"The afternoon of life must also have a significance of its own and cannot be merely a pitiful appendage to life's morning."

"The first half of life is devoted to forming a healthy ego, the second half is going inward and letting go of it."

"As far as we can discern, the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light of meaning in the darkness of mere being." (...) "The least of things with a meaning is worth more in life than the greatest of things without it."

"Deep down, below the surface of the average man's conscience, he hears a voice whispering, 'There is something not right', no matter how much his rightness is supported by public opinion or moral code."

"Man is never helped in his suffering by what he thinks of himself, but only by revelations of a wisdom greater than his own. It is this which lifts him out of his distress."

"Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks within, awakens."

"What you resist, persists." (...) "Whatever is rejected from the self, appears in the world as an event."

"We meet ourselves time and again in a thousand disguises on the path of life."

"A man who has not passed through the inferno of his passions has never overcome them." (...) "No tree, it is said, can grow to heaven unless its roots reach down to hell."

"Knowing your own darkness is the best method for dealing with the darkness of other people." (...) "Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves."

"The most terrifying thing is to accept oneself completely." (...) "There's no coming to consciousness without pain." (...) "Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate."

"The privilege of a lifetime is to become who you really are."

"Where love rules, there is no will to power, and where power predominates, love is lacking. The one is the shadow of the other."

"The shoe that fits one person pinches another; there is no recipe for living that suits all cases."

"I have frequently seen people become neurotic when they content themselves with inadequate or wrong answers to the questions of life. They seek position, marriage, reputation, outward success of money, and remain unhappy and neurotic even when they have attained what they were seeking. Such people are usually confined within too narrow a spiritual horizon. Their life has not sufficient content, sufficient meaning. If they are enabled to develop into more spacious personalities, the neurosis generally disappears."

"Be silent and listen: have you recognized your madness and do you admit it? Have you noticed that all your foundations are completely mired in madness? Do you not want to recognize your madness and welcome it in a friendly manner? You wanted to accept everything. So accept madness too. (...) Be glad that you can recognize it, for you will thus avoid becoming its victim. Madness is a special form of the spirit and clings to all teachings and philosophies, but even more to daily life, since life itself is full of craziness and at bottom utterly illogical. Man strives toward reason only so that he can make rules for himself. Life itself has no rules. That is its mystery and its unknown law. What you call knowledge is an attempt to impose something comprehensible on life."

Carl Gustav Jung

"When you connect to the silence within you, that is when you can make sense of the disturbance going on around you."

Stephen Richards

"The soul is placed in the body like a rough diamond and must be polished, or the luster of it will never appear."

Daniel Defoe

"The greatest thing in the world is to know how to belong to oneself."

Michel de Montaigne

“The greatest yoga posture is to stand firm in awareness.”

“The center of the wheel is our desire for self-transcendence. This unites all the branches of yoga.”

“Success in yoga depends on integrating meditation with action.”

“Whenever we react to life out of spiritual ignorance and misidentification, and therefore whenever we react automatically to pleasant and unpleasant experiences, we create corresponding karmic imprints in the depths of our own mind. That means we condition our consciousness to continue to respond in the same way, and so, we are trapped in a vicious cycle. *Samsara* means that we are forever recycling our unenlightened selves.”

“Self-transcendence is the moment-to-moment practice of going beyond the ego-contraction, beyond the illusion that we are a particular body-mind and personality. (...) Without the practice of self-transcendence, the work of self-transformation remains at the level of self-improvement.”

“Our strongly engrained habit of dualistic perception is an addiction. We have to admit to ourselves that this is so, even though this state is prevalent in our civilization, and promoted in many different ways, it’s by no means natural. When we deny that there is anything wrong with our so-called ordinary state, we engage in collective self-denial. By labelling our consensus-reality, our ordinary state of consciousness, as normal, we practically dismiss and also disempower all the other states of consciousness.”

“Through identification with personality, we become our own source of suffering. Identification with the rational consciousness itself is the root of our malaise. The primary addiction to the ordinary consciousness is the basis from which arise all secondary addictions (drugs, sex, alcohol, etc.) which we might have. The secondary addictions are all substitutes for the bliss flowing from our Self-realization. Secondary addictions are desperate but mistaken attempts to deal with our primary addiction, which is our addiction to the egoic consciousness. Instead of removing this primary addiction, they fortify it. Spiritual life is a progressive recovery from the addiction of ordinary life, which is inherently schizoid and lacks fullness and bliss. Spiritual recovery can be seen as an uncovering of the spiritual dimension, a dimension which is ordinarily covered up by the self-divided ego-personality.”

“Wisdom is a function of the higher mind, the mind that’s free from confusion, egotism and emotional reactivity. The yoga masters call this higher mind *buddhi*, which means literally ‘that which is wide awake’. Wisdom is super-lucid knowing and understanding. Wisdom gives us the capacity to integrate our intelligence with life. Wisdom purifies us; it reshapes our life and transforms our character. Ultimately, wisdom allows us to cross the threshold from the finite to the infinite, from the unreal to the real, from confusion to enlightenment, from karmic compulsion to complete inner freedom, and from unhappiness to serenity and bliss.”

“The reflections of mind assume themselves to be the real thing. The truth is that this thought is a misidentification. We are neither the mirror nor the reflection. Our true identity is the transcendental awareness. We are the matrix containing all mirrors and their infinite reflections. This is the living realization of enlightened masters.”

“Unless we can die with a fully disciplined mind, death is not the portal to bliss, but merely a gateway to karmic recycling (rebirth, suffering, a new death). We can discover our true identity only when we go beyond all karmic patterns.”

“The body-mind can bind us or set us free, depending on whether wisdom is present or absent. There is a tendency in nature to transcend itself: the mind reaches beyond itself to the *atman*, the ultimate reality of pure awareness. Our mind can conceal from us our true identity, or it can reveal it to us (mind the slayer, mind the healer). (...) We have this capacity to go beyond ourselves, beyond the personality we seem to be. But yoga is asking us to do something much more radical: it's asking us to transcend our sense of self as such; it's asking us to go beyond our presumed identity in order to realize our true identity.”

“Our ego-identity is a false identity. We are like people running around with falsified documents, and we have done this for so long that now we believe that we are the individual mentioned in the documents. We arrived at this false sense of identity by reading and memorizing the details in the documents over and over again. Now we believe that's who we are. Thinking makes it so. Thinking creates the body-mind. This is one of the great insights of the ancient sages: 'you become what you contemplate'. Like Narcissus, we have been staring at our reflective image in the pond and have fallen in love with it. Now we have forgotten to remember who we are in truth.”

“Every aspect of a person's life is arranged, fashioned, modelled and formed in accordance with his ideas. We need to pay attention to our ideas and make them the highest they could possibly be.”

“Happiness in the yogic sense does not require any external stimulus. In fact, it's an inner state that comes from contentment under all circumstances. It's of the same nature as wisdom.”

“Spiritual liberation puts the rest of our life into proper perspective. It provides the right context for the goals of material welfare, pleasure and morality. In order to free ourselves from the cycle of birth and death, and from suffering, we must first cultivate a strong impulse to transcend all our conditioning, and that impulse largely depends on whether we have understood the game of life. If we have understood the game of life, then there is a growing inner non-attachment to finite things and an attachment to the infinite, to our true nature. But even this attachment must be jettisoned, because only then can we remember who we have always been.”

“We must not become discouraged when we confront the stark reality of our inner confusion and negativity, or our presently limited capacity for spiritual life.”

“Self-discipline sets up counter-habits, more benign grooves, which slowly move us into the direction of enlightenment, inner freedom. Of course, we must expect a lot of resistance during that process. If we push too hard, we are likely to become incredibly frustrated. If we don’t apply ourselves sufficiently, we won’t ever gather enough velocity to escape the gravity pull of our habit patterns. Because habits don’t like to be challenged, a certain degree of frustration is inevitable. In fact, skillful practitioners seek to frustrate creatively their own well-worn grooves. This creative self-frustration is called *tapas*. *Tapas* is fundamentally all of yoga. Before the term yoga became popular, the word *tapas* was used to denote spiritual practice.”

“Between the ultimate truth and our present condition of unenlightenment, there are many layers of knowledge and experience and capacity.”

“When we understand that enlightenment is not in conflict with worldly existence, and that *samsara* and *nirvana* are identical, then we don’t need to run away from anything. We can delight in the play of the universe without getting caught up in it.”

“Yogic self-transcendence means that we consciously direct all our efforts to transcend the human condition itself. In yoga we must practice self-surrender in the midst of any effort. The more we let go, the faster we grow on the spiritual path.”

“When a yogi is firmly grounded in truthfulness, all his actions bear appropriate fruit.”

“The real tantric yogi wants to raise the level of energy in the body. Orgasm has the opposite effect: the nervous system fires and the energy gets discharged. This energy could otherwise be used for the spiritual process.”

“Once we identify with a particular body-mind, we react to experiences in a personal kind of way, either negatively or positively: we like or we dislike what life brings us. We become attached, or we recoil. If we react very strongly, we either love or hate.”

“Anytime we experience anything – a sensation, a feeling, a thought – we deposit a seed in the unconscious. These seeds wait, until the conditions are ripe, to sprout into a new sensation, feeling or thought. These subliminal deposits, or subliminal activators, or imprints in the unconscious, can be eliminated only in the highest level of consciousness. When all these seeds are removed, the process of self-purification is complete and enlightenment occurs.”

“The principle of reversal corresponds to the practice of sealing the senses and focusing the mind. It corresponds to a reversal of our conventional behavior.”

"*Pratyahara* means restraint of the senses. The term *ahara* is also used for food: our senses are always grasping for food, which is sensations. (...) When we follow our wandering senses, we get confused and lost (sense contact, desire, frustration, anger, bewilderment). Bewilderment undermines mindfulness (or the memory of who we really are), and wisdom vanishes. And when wisdom vanishes, the person is altogether lost."

"We feel separated from the rest of existence and we feel divided within ourselves. And that's suffering. So we are always looking for ways to make ourselves whole. But by and large, our methods tend to be unsuccessful. We always think that our misery is caused by circumstances or other people. We don't want to look at ourselves as a possible source of suffering, until we discover that our own spiritual ignorance is the breeding ground of suffering. When this insight has struck home with us, we can activate the inner eye of wisdom."

"By the practice of *dharana* (mindfulness/concentration), we hold the mind's tendency to scatter itself. Without concentration, we are lost in thought. Meditation can't succeed without concentration. We must make attention concentric; we must establish a center. The essence of concentration is onepointedness. Patanjali assumes that concentration follows on sensory inhibition, which means that he only allows concentration on an internalized object."

"We have to make our most fundamental insights the compass of our life."

"It has been found that after 80 days of continuous immersion in the state of *samadhi*, the body dies."

"Enlightenment is not a distant goal. It's our true nature, and therefore an ever-present actuality. What prevents us from realizing this truth are a number of obscurations."

"Cultivating the spiritual practice that will lead to liberation requires our complete energy and attention."

"Eightfold path of Patanjali (*Raja yoga*):

- 1) Moral restraint (outer life, social life, relationships) (*yama*)
- 2) Discipline, observances (inner disposition, intention) (*niyama*)
- 3) Posture (*asana*)
- 4) Breath control (*pranayama*)
- 5) Sense withdrawal (*pratyahara*)
- 6) Concentration (*dharana*)
- 7) Meditation (*dhyana*)
- 8) Ecstasy (*samadhi*)"

"What really matters on the spiritual path is mindfulness in all situations: *to be in the world, but not of it.*"

“No experience is ultimately satisfying. Even the most pleasurable sensation, when we experience it over and over again, becomes boring and unfulfilling.”

“The construction of a *mandala*, or *yantra*, serving as the deity’s seat is a major aspect of the tantric ritual. The construction creates a sacred space that is properly protected against unwelcome entities and negative energies.”

“Through *mantra*, *mudra*, *nyasa*, *yantra*, and all the other numerous elements of tantric ritual, the initiates carve a sacred niche for themselves out of ordinary reality. In this sacred space into which deities and other higher beings are invoked, they relentlessly pursue the great challenge of self-transformation. To the outsider, who is busy with work and family and not driven by the impulse for liberation, the lifestyle of the tantrikas looks difficult and obsessive. From the initiatory point of view, however, it is the lifestyle of the ordinary person that seems obsessive and pointless, for the worldling (*samsarin*) is constantly looking for self-fulfillment and happiness without understanding that these cannot be achieved by conventional means. Whatever pleasure the ordinary person may chance upon, it is always short-lived and unfulfilling. The tantric path, by contrast, is the quest for the everlasting bliss, the ‘great delight’ (*maha-sukha*), that remains undiminished in all circumstances.”

“Initiates know that the energy and time they invest in complicated rituals and long meditations are not wasted but are the shortest route to the kind of self-fulfillment that transcends the ego and all its fears and limitations that merely keep others bound to the spatiotemporal universe. As the Bhagavad-Gita taught long ago, everyone is destined to be active, for life itself is action. The challenge is to be active in such a way that our actions are not dictated by ignorance or delusion but by liberating wisdom. Far from being merely superstitious, ritual is a potent means for purifying the mind so that it can recognize its true nature, which is pure Consciousness.”

Georg Feuerstein

“Die Welt kann nicht reformiert, sie kann nur erlöst werden.”

“Ein Mensch, der sich der Welt anpasst, wird zur Welt und hat überhaupt keine Salzkraft mehr.”

Jakob Tscharntke

“Knowing others is wisdom; knowing yourself is enlightenment.”

Lao-Tzu

“Renunciation automatically occurs when you come face-to-face with your real existential situation. (...) Wasting time investing your life in purposes that ‘you cannot take with you’ becomes ludicrous, and, when you radically shift your priorities, you feel a profound relief at unburdening yourself of a weight of worry over inconsequential things.

(...) The wisdom that is essential for your actual liberation systematically develops through the meditation of the twofold selflessness. The two kinds of selflessness are subjective selflessness and objective selflessness. You begin by cultivating awareness of subjective selflessness, observing your habitual sense of having a solid self-center, a fixed, definite, unchanging identity that is you. You take some care in noticing how absolute and undeniable this self seems, how your drives and impulses and thoughts seem to come from it, how unquestionable it seems. When you really become aware how deeply you feel such a center, you begin a process of digging deeper to find it, to put your finger on it, to really know it, to know who and what you really are. (...) You analyze your inner constituents of body and mind, sensations, emotional and conceptual mechanisms, and the complex of consciousness itself. You need to develop heightened powers of concentration systematically, to stay with this analysis as it goes deeper and deeper.

(...) Eventually, the investigation leads you to realize that you are going to fail to find that hard-core identity of the self. You realize that it does not exist at your center in the way that it seems to. You have moments of feeling that you perhaps don’t exist at all, but you realize that that sense of nonexistence is also not itself a hard-core identity. (...) You realize that identity is a construct, a relative fabrication, and you begin to understand objective selflessness. You look out at others and at the objects of the world, realizing that they too are mere relativistic entities, with no hard-core identities, either.

(...) any sense of absolutely anything is only relative, and anything you can sense at all is only relative. This is to realize the equivalence of voidness and relativity, no longer looking for an absolute void beyond the world, no longer depreciating the reactive world as lacking ultimate value. (...) From there on it is a matter of deepening this realization by pushing it inward, to overlay your instinctual misknowledge that still habitually gives you a feeling of an enduring hard-core identity. The more you can bear down through focused concentration on this specific identity feeling, the more free you will become. This is where meditation is really needed: after you have a sound realization. This is where you realize how deep your instincts go. This is where you begin to desire a higher technology of deepening your realization and expanding your liberation.”

Robert Thurman

“Everything is shown up by being exposed to the light, and whatever is exposed to the light itself becomes light.”

St. Paul

"It has been stated by Thomas Szasz that what people really need and demand from life is not wealth, comfort or esteem but *games worth playing*. He who cannot find a game worth playing is apt to fall prey to *accidie*, defined by the Fathers of the Church as one of the Deadly Sins, but now regarded as a symptom of sickness. Accidie is paralysis of the will, a failure of the appetite, a condition of generalized boredom, total disenchantment (...). Such a state (...) is a prelude to what is loosely called *mental illness*."

"Seek, above all, for a game worth playing. Such is the advice of the oracle to modern man. Having found the game, play it with intensity – play as if your life and sanity depended on it. (They do depend on it.) Follow the example of the French existentialists and flourish a banner bearing the word *engagement*. Though nothing means anything and all roads are marked *no exit*, yet move as if your movements had some purpose. If life does not seem to offer a game worth playing, then *invent one*. For it must be clear, even to the most clouded intelligence, that any game is better than no game."

"What game did the mystics play? Within the matrix imposed by their religion, these players were attempting the most difficult game of all, the Master Game, the aim of which is the attainment of full consciousness or real awakening. It was natural for these players to play their game within a religious matrix. The basic idea underlying all the great religions is that man is asleep, that he lives amid dreams and delusions, that he cuts himself off from the universal consciousness (the only meaningful definition of God) to crawl into the narrow shell of a personal ego. To emerge from this narrow shell, to regain union with the universal consciousness, to pass from the darkness of the ego-centered illusion into the light of the non-ego, this was the real aim of the Religion Game as defined by the great teachers, Jesus, Gautama, Krishna, Mahavira, Lao-tze and the Platonic Socrates. Among the Moslems this teaching was promulgated by the Sufis, who praised in their poems the delights of reunion with the Friend. To all these players, it was obvious that the Religion Game as played by the paid priests, with its shabby confidence tricks, promises, threats, persecutions and killings, was merely a hideous travesty of the real game, a terrible confirmation of the truth of the statement: *These people praise me with their lips but their hearts are far from me... They have eyes but see not, ears but hear not, neither do they understand*.

So little did they understand that, at least within the matrix of the 'Christian' religion, it actually became physically dangerous during several centuries to try to play the Master Game at all. Serious players found themselves accused of heresy, imprisoned by the Inquisitors, tortured, burned alive. It became impossible to play the game openly. To survive at all, one had to adopt a disguise, pretend that one's real interest was alchemy or magic, both of which were permitted by the priests, who did not understand the real significance of either.

(...) The Master Game still remains the most demanding and difficult of games and, in our society, there are few who play. Contemporary man, hypnotized by the glitter of his own gadgets, has little contact with his inner world, concerns himself with outer, not inner space. But the Master Game is played entirely in the

inner world, a vast and complex territory about which men know very little. The aim of the game is true awakening, full development of the powers latent in man. The game can be played only by people whose observations of themselves and others have led them to a certain conclusion, namely, that man's ordinary state of consciousness, his so-called waking state, is not the highest level of consciousness of which he is capable. In fact, this state is so far from real awakening that it could appropriately be called a form of somnambulism, a condition of *waking sleep*.

Once a person has reached this conclusion, he is no longer able to sleep comfortably. A new appetite develops within him, the hunger for real awakening, for full consciousness. He realizes that he sees, hears, knows only a tiny fraction of what he could see, hear and know, that he lives in the poorest, shabbiest of the rooms in his inner dwelling, but that he could enter other rooms, beautiful and filled with treasures, the windows of which look out on eternity and infinity. In these rooms he would transcend his petty personal self and undergo spiritual rebirth, *the rising from the tomb* which is the theme of so many myths and the basis of all the mystery religions, including Christianity. He who arrives at this conclusion is ready to play the Master Game."

"All inner work involves the imposing of inner silence. To enter the silence as often as possible and to remain there for as long as possible is the goal of all followers of the Way. (...) There is nothing dramatic or heroic about the struggle with the noise machine. Results are obtained by the repetition of small efforts, like drops of water wearing away a stone. Before these efforts can be made, the student must have an inner conviction that daydreams and imaginary conversations really are useless, unprofitable, and, at times, downright dangerous. Only when he has acquired a taste for the inner silence and a corresponding distaste for the inner noise can his efforts attain a level of intensity that produces real change. He must realize, not just intellectually but also emotionally, that the stream of daydreams occupying his mind is a symptom of the state of waking sleep, of existence in the third room, a world of unreality and illusion. If he wishes to emerge from the third room, he must sacrifice his daydreams however attractive or harmless these dreams may appear."

"The practice of simple awareness is impossible without control of attention. Attention is to awareness as the oil in a lamp is to its flame. While there is oil in the lamp, the flame persists. Once the oil is exhausted, the flame goes out. Control of attention is the one function that man possesses which may be said to confer on him a certain amount of free will. He can *direct his attention*. (...) A man's level of consciousness can be measured by the freedom of his attention. In the state of identification he has no *freedom to attend*. He thinks he has, but this is one of the illusions which this state imposes. Actually, he is a slave to whatever stimulus happens to have taken his fancy."

"Directed attention does not hypnotize or stupefy in the same way as does enslaved or dispersed attention. But it does not induce full awakening either. A person using directed attention can still be deeply identified with the task in hand. His inner space is still completely occupied with whatever he happens to

be doing. He has no existence apart, no real being. Only when he learns to withdraw from the task in hand, to maintain a certain thread of awareness which remains apart from thinking, feeling, sensing, does he begin to get the taste of the fourth state of consciousness. (...) This sensing of the self as not self but merely as one of the objects of the environment removes at one stroke all fears, all tensions, all anxieties. A condition of buoyancy and ease, a delightful ataraxia, falls to the lot of one in whom such a condition has been induced. He is in harmony with the unconditioned, unnamable source of all reality. His work perfectly accords with eternal principles and accordingly shows a rhythm, an inner balance. Nowhere is impatience or disharmony. The face which, in a state of identification, is either tense or stupid, now wears the calm, withdrawn air that one observes in the features of meditating Bodhisattvas. (...) This inner freedom is not attained without long and careful training. It is a state of physiological and psychological equipoise, seemingly effortless, but maintained by a watchfulness as real as that which enables the tightrope walker to maintain his balance high above the heads of the crowd. There is no tension in this watchfulness. It is flexible, pervasive, an invisible shield, an instrument that catches and holds impressions before these impressions can set the inner machinery in motion."

"Generalized attention separated from the ego offers to one who employs it the power of choice of impressions. He who has a watchman at the gate can scrutinize all who try to enter, can receive the impressions he chooses and reject the rest. There is no other art more important than the art of receiving impressions, for a man's impressions are as much a food as his daily bread."

"Accept or reject – this is the basis of the inner work that leads to the genesis of a truly free being. A man's health, as well as his inner development and level of being, depends just as much on how his impressions are metabolized as on how his food is metabolized. The way in which impressions are metabolized depends on the level of attention and on the quality of that attention."

"The discerning student will do well to stay as close as possible to simple realities, shunning the poisonous exhalations of the man-swarm, unless he has reached that stage of inner development at which a man can live anywhere: *By skilfull means one can live comfortably even in hell*. He who has not reached this stage (and it is a very advanced one) should be guided in his choice of occupation by the saying: *You will never smell like a rose if you roll in a dunghill*. (...) He will be careful to plan his activities in such a way that they leave him ample leisure for meditation, contemplation and the psychophysiological exercises necessary for the generation of high-energy substances."

"Arcana or yantra can be used to provide a fixed point for the disturbed mind, the diagram or picture being visualized and held in the field of awareness. The effort of holding it little by little drains energy from the destructive mental process and attaches it to a creative process, reestablishing the sense of proportion and enabling the student to laugh at his egotistical preoccupations which, in the presence of the larger concepts, appear trivial indeed. After the storm has subsided he can return again to the silent world and to the practice of

simple awareness, which, slowly but surely, will bring him to the fourth room and the fifth.”

“The sense of self depends on man’s level of consciousness, the room in which he happens to be at a given moment. In the *first room*, dreamless sleep, there can be no self-sense. Man is totally unaware of his own existence. In the *second room*, the dream state, man has a self-sense that is full of contradictions and absurdities, a vague, fragmentary, confused affair. In the *third room*, identification or waking sleep, the self-sense is narrow, limited and strictly personal. It is subject to change without notice. Every thought, emotion, sensation can wear the mantle of the self, call itself *I* and dominate behavior, only to be pushed aside by some other *I* which is equally mechanical, equally accidentally evoked. In the *fourth room*, the room of self-transcendence, self is no longer personal; it transcends the limitations of time and of space, is not altered from moment to moment by changing circumstances. In the *fifth room*, the separate self is transcended completely. (...) In order to pass from the third room into the fourth, a man must die at one level and be reborn at another. This was the secret which underlay all the mystery religions, including true Christianity. (...) In practical terms a man must be ready to sacrifice everything he calls *I*, to regard all the manifestations of his being as objectively as if they were part of a theatrical performance, to hold on nowhere, neither to body nor to possessions nor to wife, children or home, to become, inwardly in any case, a nonpossessory.”

“Man without inner unity has no true will. He changes from moment to moment. (...) he has no permanent *I* and his wants can be completely contradictory. The *I* or selves change like characters on a stage and each *I* suffers from the delusion that *I* has a will of its own. Only in the fourth state of consciousness does man possess will, but by that time he has stopped thinking in terms of *I*. All action is the product of the three forces of nature (will to pleasure/activity/Eros, will to death/inertia/Thanatos, will to power). Only he who is blinded by egotism thinks ‘I am the doer’. (...) The two higher wills are the will to meaning and the will to self-transcendence. These wills work only in man, and only in a very limited proportion of the human race.”

“The transformation of an ego-centered being to a free being does not take place either easily or quickly. One is converted into the other gradually, by a series of stages, and each stage carries with it its own dangers and difficulties. The transformation begins when one of the selves in a man’s personality (the Seeker) develops an awareness of the state of sleep, or, alternatively, a hunger of the fourth state of consciousness (Beaudelaire’s *Taste of the Infinite*). The Seeker forms as a result of the working in man of the will to meaning and the will to self-transcendence.”

“Stage 4: Master.	Body of consciousness or <i>soul</i> is formed. Inner-directed, cosmically oriented man.
Stage 3: Observer.	Prospero dominates Caliban.
Stage 2: Magnetic Center.	Active quest for teacher.
Stage 1: Seeker.	First realization of sleep.
Stage 0: Sleeping Man.	Outer-directed puppet. No inner aim or real will.”

“The genesis of the Seeker may produce a fearful ferment, at least in the early stages. Selves that were once believed in and trusted now seem as lifeless as rag dolls. Aspects of the persona that once appeared admirable show themselves as grotesque masks, grinning and silly. The artist becomes disenchanted with his art, the scientist with his research, the preacher with his sermons and with his whole religion, the businessman with his business. There is an awful awareness of the limitations of life, of an imperative need to set up new values, new aims, to start a new game, before death sweeps all the pieces from the board. Unless the sense of total futility has completely paralyzed his will, a person in whom the Seeker has developed is bound to search diligently for some way out, for the Master Game, which he feels almost instinctively must exist and be worth playing. To find this game he will read everything available that might possibly provide a clue to the mystery and enable him to emerge from the prison of disenchantment. He will study works on psychology, religion, yoga, occultism, theosophy, magic. He will seek out others whose interests are similar to his own. (...) All this activity results in the transformation of the Seeker into a new and more powerful entity within the personality, an entity called, in the Gurdjieffian system, the *Magnetic Center*. (...) A weak Magnetic Center does not lead its possessor anywhere.”

“For an enlightened study of the selves, two attitudes are necessary: acceptance of their multiplicity and acceptance of their mechanicalness. The selves are like a box of clockwork dolls, some dressed one way, some another, some pleasant, some unpleasant, some clever, some stupid. The dolls have no free will. They are wound up and activated by circumstances. Under a given set of conditions, one of the dolls will leave the box, go through its performance, lapse back into quiescence. In the third state of consciousness all these dolls call themselves *I*, but to the Observer, who takes over from the Magnetic Center when the inner work has begun, they are merely puppets. In calling themselves *I*, they attribute to themselves a quality they do not really possess.”

“The master of yoga, consciously and at will, can create any number of equally unreal bodies, of human and non-human shape, and give to them illusive separate existence. He may even make them physically as ‘real’ as his own body, and, infusing into them a portion of his animal vitality, direct them as though they were living creatures.”

“Inner-directed activity occurs whenever a person arrests some mechanical reaction and performs in its place an intentional action not provoked by external stimuli.”

“Epictetus used an apt simile when he compared the true Stoic philosopher to a *spy of God*, capable of adopting all sorts of disguises, beggar or king, slave or free, but always inwardly independent of the role he happened to be playing.”

“Self-observation leads to self-knowledge, self-knowledge to self-mastery.”

“To know himself a man must know his type, know the limitations it imposes, the obstacles it places in the way. For every type there is a corresponding set of obstacles, inborn weaknesses of which the student must become aware. Though he cannot change his type, he can know his type, know his limitations both psychological and physiological. Many of the difficulties a student encounters result from attempts to perform tasks for which, by type, he is unfitted. But whereas there are certain traits that cannot be changed, there are other patterns of behavior which must be changed if one is ever to make any progress. These include various wrong workings of the machine that destroy its energies and exhaust its resources. Some of these are essence-defects, resulting from the structure of the essence and very difficult to change. (...) Others are located in the persona (they are learned rather than inborn) and are much more easily corrected.”

“It is necessary, though not always easy, to distinguish between the essence and the persona. (...) In the Gurdjieffian system, in Carl Jung’s teachings and in William Sheldon’s classification of temperaments, the word *persona*, or *personality*, is given the meaning ‘something not one’s own’. It is made up of patterns of behavior acquired in the course of life, imposed by education, by the culture in which man lives, the people he associates with and so on. In the course of growing up, an individual develops several personae, masks which he wears and behind which he takes refuge. Sometimes these masks are very grotesque and unsuitable, having no correspondence to the essence or type. (...) The little child lives in the essence and has no need of masks. This living in the essence, so typical of the small child, is referred to many times in the gospels: *Except ye be converted and become as little children*, etc. (...) In the conditions under which we live, a persona is necessary. It enables us to play roles, cope with various situations. (...) The persona, in any civilized society, is necessary. It is an adaptation that helps a man to fit into his environment. (...) The further one goes from city streets and what passes for culture, the less necessary does the persona become.”

“To emerge from the third state of consciousness and attain the fourth or fifth involves exertion of will and intelligence, a constant struggle against inner obstacles, inertia, credulity and various illusions. To imagine that it can be accomplished easily is merely to indulge in one more form of self-deception.”

“The essence nature of the type called *brahmin* is an urge to know the truth. Depending on the strength with which this urge is felt, the man with this kind of self-being will play the Science Game, the Art Game or the Master Game. The true brahmin pursues truth at all costs and will not permit considerations of comfort or convenience to stand in his way. His most outstanding characteristic is his objectivity, his ability to rise above the dust of the arena, to resist the

hypnotizing effect of words and the blind passions of cults, political or religious. (...) Their objectivity gives them the power to evaluate correctly the forces at work in society at a given moment.”

“Followers of the way of the recluse, in order to escape from what the religious call *temptation*, simplify their life games to the point at which they have almost no game left. (...) Such a discipline may, when persisted in long enough, engender a certain inner serenity, but that serenity is purchased at a very high price. Under these cloistered conditions, the full development of an individual’s potentialities cannot take place. He is in a very real sense a deprived individual and the fact that the deprivation is self-imposed does not make it any less mutilating. The flash and sparkle of life, its challenges, triumphs, sorrows, temptations, obstacles, pass by the cloistered monk, leaving him untouched. He is sterile, having deliberately refused to perform the reproductive function, and his sexual sterility is often accompanied by spiritual sterility. He may attain great development in one part of his being, but that development, because of his restricted environment and experience, is bound to be lopsided, unless he entered the monastery after he had had a full taste of life’s variety.”

“(…) dying can be an achievement, the art of dying is as difficult as the art of living, and he who would master the first must also be master of the second. A person can know when to die and can die at will, intentionally, with full awareness of what he is doing. Only he who has striven to create in himself a soul is a candidate for a honorable death. He who has not has lived like a fool and will die like a dog. (...) No master of yoga ever dies in the normal manner, unless, perchance, he be killed suddenly and unexpectedly; he merely relinquishes the physical form which he has come to recognize as no more than a garment to be put on or off as desired, in full consciousness while immersed in the ecstatic condition of mind where the Clear Light ever shines. (...) the Great Yogin transcends normal processes by voluntarily relinquishing his old, outworn body and taking a new body, without suffering any break in the continuity of his consciousness. (...) Needless to say, such an achievement is made possible only by years of intensive inner work. The great capacity for one-pointedness, for concentration of awareness, for indifference to pain and fearless confrontation of the unknown is not something to be acquired in a few weeks or a few months.”

“He who enters the fifth state of consciousness without preparation may be spiritually paralyzed by this experience. He has seen too much too soon and, as a result, all games become meaningless. He cannot play the life games that satisfy men in the third state of consciousness. He cannot play the Master Game because he knows nothing about it and has no teacher. So he becomes, like Daumal’s *leaf in the wind*, an even more helpless plaything of external forces than he was before his rash experiment.”

“(…) one thing must be remembered. We have only a limited amount of time in which to create this very special entity we call the Observer. We can be said to have entered the Work only when we have created it and endowed it with enough power to enable it to control the other servants.

Power is developed through practice, through steady, unrelenting effort, day after day, week after week. In this respect, the Work is like any other special skill, such as the skill required to play a difficult musical instrument. 'If I fail to practice for a day,' said a famous concert pianist, 'I notice the difference. If I fail to practice for two days, my wife notices the difference. If I fail to practice for a week, even the audience notices the difference.'

The inner Work involves greater effort than does learning to master the piano because the human body is a much more complex instrument. This fact is often overlooked. People imagine they can become Masters by attending a meeting once a week, by doing a few movements, by indulging once a year in some sort of heroics which they describe as making super-efforts. All this is part of the fantasy Work and can only result in self-deception. The real Work involves constantly repeated effort, a never ending struggle with identification. We become identified again and again in the course of the day and must drag ourselves back and remember. Only in this way can any permanent change be brought about. Hence the aphorism:

Until your practice reaches a certain level of intensity and continuity you will not attain any permanent results."

"In the depths of our being, we have as our first and deepest love, God. (...) As we grow in attunement with the Divine, we begin to sense a relationship with Him beside which all other desires for relationships fade in comparison. Thus, our soul's sincere desire is oneness with Him, and, to paraphrase St. Augustine, our souls are restless till they find their rest in Him."

"Remember yourself always, everywhere. (...) Self-remembering should be the basis of our practice but in actual life that practice becomes very sporadic. (...) First it is necessary to realize that this will happen. Again and again, in the course of the day, we will become identified. The watchman at the gate will fall asleep. All sorts of casual impressions, daydreams, random thoughts will occupy our awareness. Instead of being centered, we will become scattered, blown about like a leaf in the wind. Our *chi* will be dissipated. (...) Aim is lost. Inspiration dies. A feeling of futility replaces our sense of direction. The great project (...) loses its meaning. At this point, it becomes necessary for the Deputy Steward, or the Observer, to call for a meeting of all the other servants. The central question of life aim has to be reconsidered. (...) *To be awake is everything.*"

"The higher will pushes people in one direction only, from sleep to awakening, from weakness to strength. It has three components, the will to power (over oneself, not over others), the will to truth and the will to self-transcendence. These three components must be kept in balance."

"Substitute intentional doing for accidental happening."

Robert S. De Ropp, *The Master Game*

"Life is Real only when I Am."

"What you call the subconscious is in my opinion the real human consciousness."

"A man is never the same for long. He is continually changing. He seldom remains the same even for half an hour."

"Awakening begins when a man realizes that he is going nowhere and does not know where to go."

"A man must first of all understand certain things. He has thousands of false ideas and false conceptions, chiefly about himself, and he must get rid of some of them before beginning to acquire anything new. Otherwise the new will be built on a wrong foundation and the result will be worse than before. To speak the truth is the most difficult thing in the world; one must study a great deal and for a long time in order to speak the truth. The wish alone is not enough. To speak the truth one must know what the truth is and what a lie is, and first of all in oneself. And this nobody wants to know."

"You can never awaken using the same system that put you to sleep in the first place."

"Try to understand what I am saying: everything is dependent on everything else, everything is connected, nothing is separate. Therefore everything is going in the only way it can go. If people were different everything would be different. They are what they are, so everything is as it is."

"In speaking of evolution it is necessary to understand from the outset that no mechanical evolution is possible. The evolution of man is the evolution of his consciousness, and consciousness cannot evolve unconsciously. The evolution of man is the evolution of his will, and will cannot evolve involuntarily."

"Self-observation brings man to the realization of the necessity of self-change. And in observing himself a man notices that self-observation itself brings about certain changes in his inner process. He begins to understand that self-observation is an instrument of self-change, a means of awakening."

"Awakening is possible only for those who seek it and want it, for those who are ready to struggle with themselves and work on themselves for a very long time and very persistently in order to attain it."

"Conscious faith is freedom. Emotional faith is slavery. Mechanical faith is foolishness."

"That which is easy is bad for your inner life."

"If a man could understand all the horror of the lives of ordinary people who are turning around in a circle of insignificant interests and insignificant aims, if he could understand what they are losing, he would understand that there can only be one thing that is serious for him – to escape from the general law, to be free. What can be serious for a man in prison who is condemned to death? Only one thing: How to save himself, how to escape; nothing else is serious."

"Real love is a cosmic force which goes through us. If we crystallize it, it becomes the greatest power in the world."

"It is only by grounding our awareness in the living sensation of our bodies that the 'I Am', our real presence, can awaken."

"Man has no individual 'I'. But there are, instead, hundreds and thousands of separate small 'I's, very often entirely unknown to one another, never coming into contact, or, on the contrary, hostile to each other, mutually exclusive and incompatible. Each minute, each moment, man is saying or thinking 'I'. And each time his 'I' is different. Just now it was a thought, now it is a desire, now a sensation, now another thought, and so on, endlessly. Man is a plurality. Man's name is legion."

"Sincerity is the key which will open the door through which you will see your separate parts, and you will see something quite new. You must go on trying to be sincere. Each day you put on a mask, and you must take it off little by little."

"Listen, you have now found the conditions in which the desire of your heart can become the reality of your being. Stay here, until you acquire a force in you that nothing can destroy. Then you'll need to go back into life, and there you will measure yourself constantly with forces which will show you your place."

"There is a cosmic law which says that every satisfaction must be paid for with a dissatisfaction."

"When we speak of prayer or of the results of prayer, we always imply only one kind of prayer – petition, or we think that petition can be united with all other kinds of prayer. Most prayers have nothing in common with petitions. I speak of ancient prayers; many of them are much older than Christianity. These prayers are, so to speak, recapitulations; by repeating them aloud or to himself a man endeavors to experience what is in them, their whole content, with his mind and feeling."

"I ask you to believe nothing that you cannot verify for yourself. (...) The sooner a man begins to verify all he hears, the better it is for him."

"To know means to know all. Not to know all means not to know. In order to know all, it is only necessary to know a little. But, in order to know this little, it is first necessary to know pretty much."

"A man may be born, but in order to be born he must first die, and in order to die he must first awake."

"Man has no permanent and unchangeable I. Every thought, every mood, every desire, every sensation says 'I'. (...) Man seldom remains the same even for half an hour. (...) One of man's important mistakes, one which must be remembered, is his illusion in regard to his I."

"You must understand that ordinary efforts do not count; only superefforts count."

"Without self knowledge, without understanding the working and functions of his machine, man cannot be free, he cannot govern himself and he will always remain a slave."

"In right knowledge, the study of man must proceed on parallel lines with the study of the world, and the study of the world must run parallel with the study of man."

"Man must use what he has, not hope for what is not."

"There are two struggles: an Inner-world struggle and an Outer-world struggle... you must make an intentional contact between these two worlds; then you can crystallize data for the Third World, the World of the Soul."

"Knowledge and understanding are quite different. Only understanding can lead to being, whereas knowledge is but a passing presence in it."

"If knowledge outweighs being, a man knows but has no power to do. It is useless knowledge. On the other hand, if being outweighs knowledge, a man has the power to do, but does not know, that is, he can do something but does not know what to do. The being he has acquired becomes aimless and efforts made to attain it prove to be useless."

"If you want to lose your faith, make friends with a priest."

"Rest comes not from the quantity but from the quality of sleep."

"Every ceremony or rite has a value if it is performed without alteration. A ceremony is a book in which a great deal is written. Anyone who understands can read it. One rite often contains more than a hundred books."

"Remember yourself always and everywhere."

"Two things in life are infinite: the stupidity of man and the mercy of God."

"All religions speak about death during this life on earth. Death must come before rebirth. But what must die? False confidence in one's own knowledge, self-love and egoism. Our egoism must be broken. We must realize that we are

very complicated machines, and so this process of breaking is bound to be a long and difficult task. Before real growth becomes possible, our personality must die."

"Faith cannot be given to man. Faith arises in a man and increases in its action in him not as the result of automatic learning, that is, not from any automatic ascertainment of height, breadth, thickness, form and weight, or from the perception of anything by sight, hearing, touch, smell or taste, but from understanding. Understanding is the essence obtained from information intentionally learned and from all kinds of experiences personally experienced."

"Formerly, it may be said, my whole being was possessed by egoism. All my manifestations and experiencings flowed from my vanity. The meeting with Father Giovanni killed all this, and from then on there gradually arose in me that 'something' which has brought the whole of me to the unshakable conviction that, apart from the vanities of life, there exists a 'something else' which must be the aim and ideal of every more or less thinking man, and that it is only this something else which may make a man really happy and give him real values, instead of the illusory 'goods' with which in ordinary life he is always and in everything full."

"With thorns in the inner world there will always be roses in the outer world, in law-able compensation."

"The being of two people can differ from one another more than the being of a mineral and an animal. This is exactly what people do not understand. And they do not understand that knowledge depends on being. Not only do they not understand this latter but they definitely do not wish to understand it."

"Objective knowledge, the idea of unity included, belongs to objective consciousness. The forms which express this knowledge when perceived by subjective consciousness are inevitably distorted and, instead of truth, they create more and more delusions. With objective consciousness it is possible to see and feel the unity of everything. But for subjective consciousness the world is split up into millions of separate and unconnected phenomena. Attempts to connect these phenomena into some sort of system in a scientific or philosophical way lead to nothing because man cannot reconstruct the idea of the whole starting from separate facts and they cannot divine the principles of division of the whole without knowing the laws upon which this division is based."

"A man can keep silence in such a way that no one will even notice. The whole point is that we say a good deal too much. If we limited ourselves to what is actually necessary, this alone would be keeping the silence. And it is the same with everything else, with food, with pleasures, with sleep; with everything there is a limit to what is necessary. After this, 'sin' begins. This is something that must be grasped, a 'sin' is something which is not necessary."

“Religion is doing; a man does not merely think his religion or feel it, he lives his religion as much as he is able, otherwise it is not religion but fantasy or philosophy. Whether he likes it or not he shows his attitude towards religion by his actions and he can show his attitude only by his actions. Therefore if his actions are opposed to those which are demanded by a given religion he cannot assert that he belongs to that religion.”

“The advantage of the separate individual is that he is very small and that, in the economy of nature, it makes no difference whether there is one mechanical man more or less. We can easily understand this correlation of magnitudes if we imagine the correlation between a microscopic cell and our own body. The presence or absence of one cell will change nothing in the life of the body. We cannot be conscious of it, and it can have no influence on the life and functions of the organism. In exactly the same way a separate individual is too small to influence the life of the cosmic organism to which he stands in the same relation as a cell stands to our organism. And this is precisely what makes his evolution possible; on this are based his possibilities.”

“What is possible for individual man is impossible for the masses.”

“There do exist enquiring minds, which long for the truth of the heart, seek it, strive to solve the problems set by life, try to penetrate to the essence of things and phenomena and to penetrate into themselves. If a man reasons and thinks soundly, no matter which path he follows in solving these problems, he must inevitably arrive back at himself, and begin with the solution of the problem of what he is himself and what his place is in the world around him. For without this knowledge, he will have no focal point in his search. Socrates’ words, *Know thyself* remain for all who seek true knowledge and being.”

“Liberation leads to liberation. These are the first words of truth – not truth in quotation marks but truth in the real meaning of the word; truth which is not merely theoretical, not simply a word, but truth that can be realized in practice. The meaning behind these words may be explained as follows: By liberation is meant the liberation which is the aim of all schools, all religions, at all times. This liberation can indeed be very great. All men desire it and strive after it. But it cannot be attained without the first liberation, a lesser liberation. The great liberation is liberation from influences outside us. The lesser liberation is liberation from influences within us.”

“Consciousness is a state in which a man knows all at once everything that he in general knows and in which he can see how little he does know and how many contradictions there are in what he knows.”

“He who would progress in the Work must learn to earn his living with his left foot.”

George Gurdjieff

“The potential for the development of man’s understanding of the Godhead is contained within himself, and its realization is not dependent upon another incarnate individual.”

“Meditation is attuning the physical and the mental to the spiritual.”

“We bring the mind to stillness by *using* the mind, not by denying its place or existence. Through the activity of the mind, with the aid of a tool such as a mantra or an affirmation, the mind is brought into alignment with spirit. (...) To use an affirmation mantrically means to quicken the inner essence or spirit behind the words with the imaginative forces, and to allow that spirit so to fill the mind as to awaken a transformative response within the physical body. It is, of course, important to remember that this transformative work of meditation is done by the spirit within and that the affirmation serves only to direct or focus upon these spiritual forces.”

“*Contemplation* can be understood as the awakening of the response through focusing attention upon an affirmation. (...) The circulation is fixation. The light is contemplation. Fixation without contemplation is circulation without light. Contemplation without fixation is light without circulation.”

“The magnitude of the potential effect of regular practice of meditation cannot even be imagined. *The Secret of the Golden Flower* promises that meditation is so powerful a tool for spiritual growth that it can allow a man to move beyond the karmic patterns that would draw him back into the earth for a thousand incarnations.”

“(...) we can identify a process within man that tends to draw together seemingly diverse elements of consciousness. The highest activity or function of man is to work towards a state of integration.”

“(...) the Christ archetype is a pattern of healing. Man is healed when all the aspects of himself are going in the same direction. Of these aspects, there is one that has never lost contact with the Godhead, and which is unchanging. In contrast to this spiritual element of man, all other parts of himself may be altered or may pass away. So if there is to be an alignment, it will have to be in the direction towards which the spiritual nature of man seeks to grow. Healing or integration must be a step towards greater spiritual unfoldment. It is towards this purpose that the Christ archetype works in the life of man.”

“From the time of his creation there has existed within man the awareness of his own divine nature. Through the ages he has made choices that have built barriers between that universal state of consciousness and his own ego awareness. It was this process of self-imposed limitation that brought man to the point where he saw himself as primarily a physical body, with the mind little understood and the soul nearly forgotten. That pattern of love and integration which had always been a part of man’s nature was contacted only by the few who had not totally encased their conscious awareness in thought patterns

which were selfish and limiting. It was at this point in history that the Spirit of the Christ manifested in the world in the life of the man Jesus.”

“One of the fundamental laws to which man must be obedient is his own nature as a spiritual being. We must be obedient to the fact that we are divine, and our refusal to accept the validity of this idea often causes us to suffer. Such suffering can be used as a learning mechanism. Often, in such a state, man is forced to reach deeply within himself to find new strengths in order to get through these periods. Capacities and levels of awareness that otherwise might remain unknown break forth into consciousness because of the great need. In this way, suffering can become a stepping-stone to greater self-awareness.”

“The Christ consciousness is integrative in nature. It tends to bring all the aspects of oneself together, so that the confused or inharmonious ones may be lifted up and healed.”

“A karmic experience is a challenge to a man to consider a choice that he has once made or an attitude that he has once held, and to see that it was founded upon a misunderstanding of the laws of the universe. Until it is seen in this light and a way more in accord with the law of love is chosen, that pattern previously built remains as a hindrance to growth.”

“We move out of our involvement with these limiting patterns that we have created only as we choose to place a pattern of greater love in a position of higher priority in our lives.”

“Until the time of Jesus, the subconscious memory patterns of man proved a formidable barrier to any attempt by man’s physical conscious mind to contact the superconscious level. In order to build the pattern at a level closer to man in his physical consciousness, Jesus had to contend with all thought forms that mankind had collected at the fourth-dimensional level. To establish the pattern in a place so accessible to man, Jesus had to deal with all the other patterns that were already there. Because this work was being done for mankind collectively, he had to deal with not just his own fourth-dimensional thought patterns, but those of everyone. In this way, we can say that Jesus took on the sins (the karmic memories) of the world.”

“The Christ Consciousness is an *awareness* of our oneness with God that comes from within. It exists in the form of a pattern in the mind (i.e., at the fourth-dimensional level). It is brought to the conscious awareness of man only as he uses his will and chooses that pattern as the ideal. Then the mind, beginning in meditation, uses that spiritual ideal to build upon until we move from awareness in the Christ Consciousness to fulfillment in the Christ Spirit.”

“If we have set our will and mind upon spiritual growth, the first step is the setting of the spiritual ideal. In making such a conscious choice of a standard and a direction for our lives, we are providing for ourselves that which for a house is the foundation, for a ship is the rudder, for a navigator is the North Star and for

the mason is the plumb line. The ideal gives us a sense of stability, guidance and orientation, as well as a criterion for judgments.”

“(…) we can never really become aware of the totality of our inner capabilities unless we are willing constantly to set our sights upon the highest understanding that we have in the present. The man that sets his mind on the greatest truth that he has experienced and goes about trying to become one with that truth is the one who will experience a spiritual awakening, enabling him to grow beyond his present limitation.”

“ ‘*Know* who is the author of thy beliefs, as well as of what ye believe. And unless these be founded upon Creative Forces that take hold upon God Himself, is it worthy of thought, meditation?’ The inner transformation can occur only through ‘turning about in the deepest seat of consciousness’. This is achieved by focusing the attention upon the inner spiritual reality, as opposed to the demands of the outer, material world. In the Bible it is more than John the Baptist saying, ‘Repent’; it is the prodigal son saying, ‘I will arise and go to my father’. In the language of the readings, this is the setting of a spiritual ideal. The first step towards spiritual awakening is not contained in an obscure or esoteric teaching. It is simply a matter of choosing a foundation and direction, a quality of motivation, from which all growth can come.”

“When we concern ourselves with the outcome of some course of action, we miss the whole point of the spiritual life. An ideal does not mean a goal. Rather, it is concerned with the motive, purpose, intention – in sum, the spirit in which we do whatever we have to do. (...) The Way lies in doing whatever our hands find to do in His spirit of love. Choosing to work with an ideal is being willing to be primarily concerned with the purpose behind an activity. Action is to be carried out in such a way that our attitude while we work will be in accord with our ideal.”

“The most important thing we can do – in whatever situation we find ourselves – is to choose the word [‘thy spiritual concept of the ideal (...) which indicates to self the ideals spiritual’] that awakens in us the spirit of the highest that we know.”

“It is by the grace of God that we are not forced to meet entirely in one experience all of that which we have built throughout the ages. Instead, the dimension of time enables us to sequentialize our experiences and to work at one time with only a portion of what has been built. Thoughts are things, and step by step, here a little, there a little, we meet ourselves.”

“(…) consciousness as we know it is a past condition. What we see as our material world is the result of mental processes that have taken place previously.”

“(…) nothing of importance happens in our lives without being foreshadowed in a dream, because in the dream state we can tune in to that blueprint level and see what we are building.”

"Often we may try to force conditions to change at the material level without appreciating the fact that the real change must come at the mental or idea level. Such a misunderstanding is likely to lead to frustration."

"The soul body is the motivative power within, that has either grown in the constructive forces in its associations or activities, or to the gratifying, satisfying of the superficial emotions or urges."

"While the mind may not be seen by the physical senses, it can be sensed by others; that is, others may sense the conclusions that have been drawn by the body-mind of an individual, by the manner in which such an individual conducts himself in relationship to things, conditions or people."

"To use an affirmation mantrically means to quicken the inner essence or spirit behind the words with the imaginative forces, and to allow that spirit so to fill the mind as to awaken a transformative response within the physical body."

Herbert B. Puryear & Mark A. Thurston, *Meditation and the mind of man*

"Your Reverence, purity of morality is only for the sake of purity of mind. Purity of mind is only for the sake of purity of view. Purity of view is only for the sake of purity of overcoming doubt. Purity of overcoming doubt is only for the sake of purity of knowledge and insight into what is the path and what is not the path. Purity of knowledge and insight into what is the path and what is not the path are only for the sake of purity of knowledge and insight into the course of *vipassana*. Purity of knowledge and insight into the course of *vipassana* are only for the sake of purity of knowledge and insight of the path. Purity of knowledge and insight of the path are only for the sake of *nibbana*, the uncaused and unconditional. It is only for the sake of *nibbana*, the uncaused and unconditional, that I practice the noble life of purity under Lord Buddha."

Ratha-Vinita-Sutta

"Someone inquired a Hindu who had a great serenity and peace about him, no matter what pressures were put upon him, 'How do you maintain that serenity and peace?' His answer: 'I never leave my place of meditation.'"

Stephen R. Covey

"Man has a pretty static picture of the world, accidentally or forcibly imprinted upon him by means of chains of conditioned associations. Man believes his imprint board is reality."

Timothy Leary

"[The prodigal son's journey back to his Father's home] is a long one, covering a greater or less period of years, oftentimes several lifetimes, depending upon the nature and soul status of the individual. The early stage of the journey is evidenced by a spiritual awakening similar to that of the prodigal son, followed by an intense and eager thirst for knowledge of the realities of life; a turning away from former sense attraction and obeying an insistent urge from within to seek Truth wherever it can be found. In this stage the urge is largely unconscious to the seeker, especially as to its meaning and purpose; only the insistent desire to know being felt and that desire has to be satisfied. Gradually, through the deeper knowledge of the meaning of life gained as a result of the cumulative force of this urge, something unfolds in the consciousness. (...) The Christ-child is born in the heart, the bud opens into the blossom, and the fragrance and beauty of the life within shows and proves itself to all who are near."

"[With some definite experience] there is born the urge to know for one's self, and after many years of following this urge it develops into a final push which results in an expansion of consciousness and opens up a new world."

"(...) the gaining of any Truth avails little unless the living of that Truth and the building of it into soul consciousness has become the supreme desire of the aspirant. When such a desire has been awakened, the soul decides itself to living a life of Truth, or consecrates itself to God or Christ in fervent prayer and supplication, after which sooner or later the birth takes place."

"Spiritual enlightenment can be gained only upon the straight and narrow path that leads to the Kingdom. Therefore the seeking of the Kingdom must be made the first thing in your life; that sets your feet firmly on the path. (...) it must be the first and the supreme desire of your heart. No other desire can supersede it."

"(...) the Christ consciousness or the baptism of the Holy Spirit must come to all before they can enter the Kingdom. In fact, the Christ consciousness gives the right of admission to the Kingdom, and is the Consciousness of everyone who abides in the Kingdom. And what is the nature of that Consciousness? It is Divine Love which must be born in the heart of every seeker, must be nourished and thrive and grow until it becomes the very life of the disciple. When in ripened maturity, after many given opportunities have proven that Love is the nature of his soul and is not of the mind only, the disciple is permitted to enter into the joy of His Lord, the Christ, and to abide with Him in the Kingdom of His Father's Consciousness."

"(...) you will perceive that this must be an inner work and, of necessity, an individual work."

"(...) you cannot find the Kingdom until you are able to control those forces of your emotional and mental nature that heretofore had their way with you almost unopposed. If and when you are able to command, *Be still, and know I Am*, and be instantly obeyed on all planes of consciousness, then and then only will you be able to do the work that will be given you; for then only can you work in Consciousness and with the Power of Christ – the Master within."

“There is a real work – much real work to do, and never doubt, when you have once proven your ability to do it and to subject your self and your whole nature to the Master’s will, and when they have become an impersonal instrument which He can use, you will be given so much to do that there will be little time left to think of self and its concerns.”

“Along with the birth of the love-nature there awakens the desire to serve selflessly, and from then on according to the extent that Love is permitted to grow and lead, will the disciple gradually become aware of a voice within which speaks whenever it gets the attention of the conscious mind. It will be no audible voice, and there may be no actually heard words, but nevertheless something speaks within and the disciple will hear and understand. He will also note that when he heeds and obeys, a blessing in some form follows, but when he fails to obey the hints or *leadings* given, failure, trouble and often suffering result. Thus the disciple gradually learns of his higher and inner nature, and that it is unmistakably related to Love; more and more he finds himself turning within and seeking to know more of his inner self and he strives to let it guide and direct him in all things.

As he thus definitely gives his allegiance to Love and to his better Self, he is made aware of qualities in his lower nature rising unexpectedly to prominence and displaying elements of selfishness and baseness that surprise and startle him. For the lower self that had held a dominating part so long in his life is not yielding without a battle – in fact it is fighting for its very existence.

It is then you begin to realize that the Path upon which you have entered is not an easy one. The fact is, in the conquering of the lower self, you are assuming a task that will test you to the limit of your strength and endurance. But you will gradually discover that from the same source that comes the Voice will also come the strength needed to conquer and to sustain you along the way. Also you will learn that loving and selfless service releases the strength and gives the wisdom to meet every test, for while serving you are enlisted in the Cause of Brotherhood and in such work the Great Brotherhood of the Spirit always supplies all the wisdom and the strength needed to accomplish it.”

“The way to the Kingdom is within – where personalities do not exist. On that journey therefore they must be left behind. No one may expect to drag personality along and get very far. For the earnest ones – the true disciples of Christ – have speeded on ahead unhampered by the load others are attempting to carry.”

“The Disciple is one who has been a Prodigal Son, one who has traveled in a far country and has wasted his substance in wrong living. But he has gained much experience thereby, and with it much knowledge of what the world does not and cannot supply. For with that knowledge has come an understanding heart and compassion for his fellow men whom he sees wasting their substance and who are still engrossed in the things he now knows to be of no value. And therefore, because of his own former weakness, he makes allowance for the weaknesses of his brothers who do not understand. So he does not judge and condemn as he

formerly was wont to do, but somehow sees right through the personality the souls of others who are wandering in the darkness of his own former state, seeking everywhere without for the Light that all the time is shining deep in the midst of them, and they do not know it.

It is thus that the disciple's inner eyes are opened; compassion and understanding lift the veil of self and enable him to see through into the souls of his fellows, and thus to know his oneness with them."

"A disciple learns early not to deal with men and women, but with souls. Gradually he becomes more concerned with the effect upon himself than with what others say and do to him. He seeks earnestly to learn what weakness or inharmony in himself drew forth such unkind words or harmful acts that hurt and caused his soul disquiet or trouble. By thus noting such and asking the Loving One within to point out the cause, he gradually learns to avoid and eliminate all such weakness and tendencies.

Likewise in dealing with others it is not so much what the personality says or does, as what the soul is and seeks to be that interests him. Knowing that intrinsically their Higher Selves are one in Christ and that therefore their purpose is one – that they may come forth and express their real nature, often the conscious disciple will enter into a secret conspiracy with the Higher Self of the other to foil the other's personality in its every attempt to exercise its lower nature. Such are occasions for real inner growth and unfoldment."

"One of the most important lessons to be learned is that life requires one to pay for every lesson it teaches. It plays no favorites and no one can gain wisdom without paying dearly for it. We are speaking of soul knowledge – which alone is wisdom – not of the intellectual knowledge that one can get from books and from teachers. Such wisdom comes only from hard, persistent effort, forced by a determination to gain it no matter what the cost. Such are the efforts of all real disciples. They gain wisdom – for they gladly pay the price."

"Can you not see that two souls never come together intimately in any family or other relationship who do not in a way belong together? That is, they either complement or fit in with one another in such a way as to bring about or fulfill certain necessary conditions that will develop and round out their characters and bring wisdom to their souls, so that harmony may eventually express in their outer lives."

"A thing or a force is evil only so long as we do not understand the law of its being and therefore cannot control it. Such was lightning, electricity, steam, fire, the winds and the waves, before man learned to control them and afterwards to make them serve him. See what good and useful servants they are now, as a result of being studied, understood and wisely controlled.

For the same reason, a wise man, instead of fighting, rebelling against, or running away from what appears to be evil, will seek to know it for what it really is – a force permitted by God to try, test and develop man's strength of character and to teach him wisdom, and never to tempt him."

"From the beginning there have been the few who are far in advance of the masses of humanity. The race unfoldment ranges from the Immortals or Super-men, down through geniuses, or high intellectuals; through the average intelligent mortals in our highly civilized nations; then through the backward nations with their large masses of the uneducated and ignorant to the few barbaric peoples still upon the earth, the latter not far above the domestic animals in intelligence.

You must also realize that even among the most highly educated or cultured and supposedly most intelligent are very many who have not yet fully mastered all of the qualities of their animal nature. (...) So that it is a case of the soul, once awakened, having to unfold and lift up – as it progresses – the consciousness of the cell centers of all of the lower kingdoms that still comprise its being, and that it cannot itself grow without turning back, as it were, and helping along the laggard qualities of its own nature and thereby of the lower kingdoms to which it is related."

"The soul is you, is your consciousness, as you are when quiet and uninfluenced by any outer thoughts; a consciousness that is therefore independent of your human brain, which it uses only to express itself in the world of matter. You are ever trying to bring the consciousness of your human mind into oneness with your consciousness, which if you are a disciple is one with the consciousness of your Higher Self, a Son of God, who is one with His Father God's Consciousness."

"The human soul in each succeeding manifestation on earth of necessity builds for itself, under the direction of its Higher Self, a new body with a new brain mind, appearing in each earth life as a new and different personality. In each personality the soul seeks and gains new experiences, from which through its brain mind it is taught by its Higher Self many lessons whose spiritual essence is built into soul consciousness. Thus gradually the soul or ego is taught all that the Higher Self can teach it on earth, and it knows all that its Teacher knows, when evolution on earth is finished and the soul of man has become more than man. This pertains only to individual man, for when he reaches this, his divine estate, he turns back and, along with all of his Brothers who have reached that same estate, he helps the souls of his younger brothers to reach it."

"(...) it is the soul only that incarnates – not the Higher Self; that, a Son of God, stays in the higher realms of consciousness where, through the brain-mind, it directs the life and teaches the soul the lessons garnered from the experiences of the personality while living in the human body."

“(...) mind-control must be gained before one can make any headway on the path to the Kingdom. In other words, the disciple sooner or later realizes that he must be able actually to stand guard at the door of his mind and admit only the thoughts and feelings he desires to entertain, and then must learn so to rule and train his mind that it thinks and holds only the perfect thoughts he wishes to outmanifest in his body and affairs.”

“Fear is the greatest obstacle that stands in the way of progression on the inner planes, to the Kingdom of God. The moment you let fear enter the mind, you are sucked into the emotional or astral plane, and unless you are able calmly to face it there and see it for just what it is – a craven creature of your own imagining, which has come to you to be fed, for it has no life but what you give it by recognition and tremblingly entertaining it – you had better cease meditation and go about active work of some kind that will require your mind’s full attention.

Every disciple must learn, the moment any fear of whatsoever nature appears, to detect it immediately and to call it forth into the open, compel it to stand in front of him as it were, so that he can look it squarely in the face and see it for the cowardly thing it is – usually some form of selfish quality that is being disturbed in its mental dominion and thus seeks to maintain its hold over the soul.

From all this it should be seen that the way pictured is the road of mastery, is the conscious treading the Path inward to the Kingdom as ruler of your own mind. (...) the one who is master of his own mind has compelled and taught it to serve him, and other minds instinctively recognize such and render obeisance. Weaker souls are the slaves of their minds – of their thoughts and emotions.”

“Until we learn that all that we have comes from the Father within and is for His use, and not ours, except for our immediate needs, and we then act in that consciousness, knowing that as we use all in His Service more and plenty will be given us for further use, we may find our present supply cut off or grow less, and we will be allowed to feel the stress of lack for awhile. It is as if we must keep the stream ever flowing, and as we give out, more and more will be poured in. (...) it is purely a matter of attaining the right consciousness – that of absolute trusting in God as our supply, or in the Law, if you prefer.”

“Once you have sensed the impersonal world, you cannot go back to living in the world of personality with all its limitations. You will not care to look at the seeming blemishes or faults of others, once you have seen them as they exist in Truth. You will have no desire to be critical, once you have been able to view your fellow beings through the eyes of God.

In the impersonal world, there is but one power and authority. Since it is the world of God, that power must be the power of God. His principle of Truth reigns supreme. All things must be observed through the eyes of God. We must see the people of this world as God sees them and know them as He knows them.”

Joseph Benner

“All stagnation is death. Humanity is a moving mass, and this is true of it as regards single units as well as of the collective whole. Stop we cannot. We must go forwards, which is ‘God-wards’, or there is the backward line of progress, which is ignorance.”

“We are preparing to live, day in and day out.”

“Life is a series of awakenings. Ideas dawn upon the mind from time to time, are caught up by brain and body and find physical expression as acts. Our outward life with its environment is fitted to our inward development. Wealth, position, fame, power – all these are the simple expressions of individual character.”

“It is quite necessary that we should pass through certain experiences, that we rise from ideal to ideal.”

“Painful results grow out of deeds that clash with the interests of the divinity within – which is for freedom.”

“Take a youth starting in life. He has not been born with a silver spoon in his mouth. He is poor and has absolutely none to look to for help of any sort whatsoever. Now, suppose he has spirit, and instead of sitting down and bemoaning his lot, he forms a definite plan of conduct, throws his mind forward into the future, and decides to reach a certain state of development. He pictures to himself that state in its perfection, plans out the methods whereby he is to achieve it, takes in the difficulties to be met with and conquered, and by an effort of common sense reasoning sees the actual amount of good accruing to humanity and to all of God’s creatures in general. He has had to breathe life upon it by repeating the images in connection with the whole picture. He has had to acquire knowledge, seek the advice of men more experienced than himself, and all the while he has had to keep up a brave and hopeful attitude of mind. And, mark you, he scorns to think of failure. It is for him to try his level best. It is for nature, which is a hard though a just pay-mistress, to bring him his reward in its due season. The above is a fair example of the exercise of imagination.”

“A man is what his ideals are. If one man with an ideal makes fifty mistakes in a day, the man without an ideal is sure to commit many more. This is a simple truth, yet it will bear repetition here. All muscular actions, whether mental or physical, are simply fragments of the ideal.”

“The very fact of the ideal being present in your mind foreshadows its fulfillment. Our thoughts set up a magnetic centre within us. Like attracts like. (...) Each tree brings forth fruits of its kind. If we think well, we cannot act ill. The greatness of a man must find its measure in the greatness of his thoughts. (...) Our ideal is the hinge upon which our future turns. We create our own fate.”

“The first essential is to pitch our aims high. Let us look upward and upward alone. Let us pray to God for strength by all means, but let us be prepared to deserve His grace by walking a straight path.”

"If we weave our thoughts around a grand purpose in life the ideal so formed may take material form any day. (...) If the ideal is to be cherished, it must also be nourished. (...) Having set currents of holy desire in motion, we must set to deepen them in intensity and volume. Great actions are only transformed great concentrations. Desire expands the will, action clinches it into strength. Each act in the right direction goes to establish us in our ideal."

"Whatever is worth doing is worth doing well. Our deeds are accomplished best when we put heart in them."

"In the ordinary course of things we walk at a snail's pace, and progress is woefully slow. But we can quicken the pace and climb swiftly by taking ourselves in hand, by training the mind. (...) Diffusion of thoughts leads to confusion of results. (...) One thought passes through the mind and a track is made through the grey matter. The intensity of the thought will determine the depth of the track. As we think, nerve-tracks are created and the repetition of the same thought deepens that nerve-track. (...) Reading conveys suggestions to the brain and induces certain trains of thought. The human will, if it presses a thought with vigor, increases in force and mental electricity is thus generated. This is thought-force in a nutshell."

"One thought suggests other thoughts."

"The fact is there is too little manhood in men. Earnestness of the right sort is conspicuous by its absence. Such things as spiritual unfoldment – the conquest of self, are striven after by but few men. Hence when they resolve upon achieving these, the initial difficulties quench their ardour. First of all we must idealise these Higher Teachings, if we have not done so in the past. We must love them as the only things worthy of achievement. It is not the passion of selfish growth that should grip us, but the clear, cheerful atmosphere of purity that should be our guide. Then when the thoughts of mind are strung up to action we should find nothing difficult of achievement. Come day, go day, we must stick to our resolve like grim death. Nothing can crush the spirit, when it has learned to recognize itself."

"Spiritual unfoldment means a gradual stripping off of the dense and subtle sheaths in which man is clothed for the manifestation of the spirit."

"The Higher Life is the only life that is worth living. All else is mere touch-and-go."

"The result is in direct ratio to the intensity of the effort. The greater the effort, the greater the result. There is an ever-continuing, never-slackening tension of this spiritual law of cause and effect, of sowing and reaping. We only get what we deserve; not an iota more or less. The gods hold the scales evenly and nature deals in even-handed justice. No honest seeking ever goes unrewarded."

“He who works his hardest, has the most energy. Energy is ever withdrawn from those that would spend same with a niggardly hand. The supply is exactly in proportion to the exhaust. Life is unnecessarily long. (...) We ask for long life, but it is deep life that signifies. Life culminates and concentrates.”

“All yogis are tremendous causationists. There is method in their madness. They believe in methodical and persistent work. Marshal your forces properly and powerfully and success is sure.”

“To be able to appreciate greatness at its full value, we must ourselves have the germs of greatness stirring within us. The power of the spirit is struggling to uncoil itself. Your being vibrates to the thrills of spiritual forces. Your complex though confused ideas regarding your mission, your divine heritage, your birthright, are shooting into order. The pressure of your chains is telling upon your nerves. Your sufferings, your little independent twists and angles and blind gropings are the promises of your future. Intensify yourself then along these channels.”

“Man is punished not for his sins so much as by them. Nature with her pitiless ways cannot claim mercy for herself. (...) Just that comes to us which is ours by right of thought. What we seek we shall find.”

“Education, said Vivekananda, is a man-making, life-building assimilation of ideas. You must then by patient thinking build up an ideal for yourself. This done, give up all dreaming, all castle-building, and start in for the work. Then three things are necessary for effectual work. The first is earnest, ardent desire. Your heart is knitted to things of the earth, earthy, by a myriad of tiny threads. To break up the links, a strong, all-impelling force is needed. Desire ardently, longingly, for perfect establishment of chastity in your consciousness. This keen desire is a sine-qua-non. Without it, you cannot get through the difficulties that bar your way. Clothe yourself in this panoply of power and the shafts of adverse fortune shall glance off from your strong armour. (...) A man must have this force or his good intentions will die a natural death. (...) You can cultivate this force. (...) Your imagination is your creative power. (...) to train the desire-nature you must bring thought to bear upon it. Desire cannot train desire.”

“You have to develop a life-purpose. Our work is our life-preserver. (...) You must reach out to the highest and the best within the sphere of your vision. (...) Your ideal must compel your entire being. There must be tugging hard at the center of your being and earnest longing to live up to the highest within you.”

“Everything concentrates. Diffusion leads to confusion.”

“Another requisite is fearlessness. Few people possess this virtue. It has to be cultivated with assiduous zeal before you can proceed a step further.”

“The law of evolution is manifestation.”

"The powers of the soul must be turned outwards, focused upon the external world, in order that it may acquire a knowledge of it. The soul is embosemed in rapture. It is ever inward-turned. In order that it may wake up from its latent condition and find expression physically, it must be impinged upon by pain. If there be a continued influx of streams of bliss, no power would manifest. (...) The greater the stirring and the more continued the spasm of pain, the deeper the impression left upon the memory, the fiercer the output of soul energy. When it is a gentle twinge only, the soul turns over like the proverbial sleepy boy and forgets it instantly. You repeat your folly. (...) The first and most important function of pain is to call out the activity-aspect of the soul. Remember, it has no permanent place. (...) Truly, most truly, is pain transmuted into power. (...) pain purifies. (...) Now this cleansing process you set about only under the crucifixion of pain. Human nature is obdurate. For ages the animal propensities have been developed. Unless drastic methods be employed they are impossible of subjugation. There is nothing like pain as a teacher. (...) Once your nature has been passed through the fire of suffering it will have known the serious side of life. It will represent sterner stuff than the mere gibbering, imitative tendencies of the ape. (...) pain is a discipliner of mind and body."

"The *sanyasin* has given up his body. He knows it is the mortal, the grosser side of his nature. He trains it after certain methods; purifies and subdues it – that done, he is free. He is non-attached. He is the master. He can turn the full current of his life-forces upon a single thought, and so vitalize it with the electric principle in himself that it shall have all the potency of the charged wires of a dynamo."

"You must understand your own nature if you are to be fearless. (...) Now, brother, renounce mentally, all attachment to impermanent ends. Dedicate yourself to the Higher Life. The more completely you can do so, the greater the influx of light, the clearer your vision spiritually. You fear because you are laboring under the evil suggestions of your brain-born intellect. As you succeed in giving up, your soul shall expand and burst asunder the clinging chains of the senses, which breed fear through ignorance. Resolve to be perfectly fearless, and so shall you be according to the strength of your resolve."

"Ignorance is the only soil where evils can grow and germinate, so says Patanjali. The misdirection of nature's forces entails misery, pain and sorrow."

"Have you ever caught a glimpse of the peace that passeth all understanding? (...) Such indeed is the ineffable sense of power serene that folds its wings around the earnest yogi. (...) realization alone vanquishes the weapons of skepticism and doubt. (...) Feel convinced, student, that the emotion which impels to lofty aspiration and noble achievement is powerless in itself, unless the clear light of expanded intellect irradiates the soul and shines full along your path. (...) Nature is conquered by Obedience. (...) Knowledge invests you with the power to control. Nature's forces are at your disposal and you must learn how to manipulate them."

“No; so long as you are a slave, you cannot love and worship the Infinite. The intellect must be developed along spiritual lines; the will-force must have vanquished the animal cravings which are ever exerting a pull downwards. The torch of wisdom must be lighted in the secret chamber of your heart.”

“Prayer is the sincere lifting of the soul to the source of All-power. Prayer is the burning desire of the soul to achieve inner wisdom. Prayer is the earnest strain upwards of the intelligence to pierce the dark penetralia of ignorance. Prayer is the ceaseless pressure upon the superconscious mind – the divine part of ourselves – to expand our sphere of insight. Prayer is the deepening of the intellect and the expansion of the heart. Prayer is the triumphant conjunction of reason with intuition. Prayer is the cry of the purified and expanded soul for power and wisdom to help and uplift, to purify and ennoble, to exalt and strengthen those towards whom it may feel itself drawn by the bond of spiritual affinity. Prayer is the longing of the son to cooperate with his father; to lift on his own shoulders a little of the heavy *karma* of this world. Prayer is the struggle of the soul to free its wings; the flutter of the heart through the awe of lofty idealism; the instinctive leaning on our secret selves; the drawing inwards for more light and life. Prayer is the concentration of the spirit on the problems of the divine life; the turning of the searchlight of the superconscious Self upon the riddles of existence. Prayer is the filling of inner vision with positive light – light that rends asunder the veils of darkness and *maya*. Prayer is the soul ascent up the magnetic chain of evolution. Prayer is the meditation on the Infinite in the silence. Prayer is the faith of the seer in his visions; in his contemplation of the facts of life, inner and outer, subjective and objective, from the highest standpoint, in the utmost trust that he reposes in the Infinite law that sweetly and steadfastly seeks to ever provide our feet with iron shoes for rough roads. Prayer that craves a particular commodity – anything less than all good – is vicious. Prayer is the contemplation of the facts of life from the highest point of view. It is a soliloquy of a beholding and jubilant soul. It is the spirit of God pronouncing His works good. But a prayer as a means to effect a private end is meanness and theft. It supposes dualism and not unity in nature and consciousness. As soon as the man is at one with God, he will not beg. He will then see prayer in all action. The thoughts of the purified soul are all prayer. (...) It is your nature to pray.”

“The right exercise of thought-power is an act of creation. (...) The action of thought manifests itself continually.”

“The mind cannot be tampered with without injury to the body and vice versa. Remember, your entire physical organ is a thought form, coarse or fine according to the quality of your thoughts. Certain thoughts exhaust the life force, others create it. (...) Training is necessary. Knowledge must be gained. Strength of the will power must be developed. (...) we have to acquire knowledge and then patiently see to the practical application of it in life. Mere intellectual contemplation of an idea is not the proper way to success (...).”

“(…) the attention should be turned to something lofty and noble. We must go on encouraging the inflow of noble ideas, till, at last, the evil thought is cut off from our mental vision and drops off altogether. The mind can think of one thing at a time. Think nobly and loftily and the evil thoughts will soon take the hint and cease to disturb you.”

“The most important factor in the training and development of mind, in the expansion or rather the unfoldment of the soul, is concentration. Concentration means the power of holding the mind to centre, to a focal point, without allowing any other thoughts to touch you. Concentration is perfect attention.”

“Each act must have a well-defined basis and should be seen complete mentally previous to being externalized. Forethought must precede action. Decision and tenacity of purpose should accompany its performance. A complete decision of the mind clears the mental field and is really the battle half won, at times, wholly won. Each utterance must be well grounded on a clear thought. It should be based on a strong conviction if it is to tell. (...) Control speech, my friend. It is a mighty power.”

“Each evil thought once entertained with delight sets up a magnetic centre for the attraction of similar others. It must be excluded promptly and a good thought substituted in its place. This must be done with tireless zeal till our mind will automatically repel the evil and welcome the good. For the law of automatism reigns supreme in entire life. (...) We should keep ourselves healthily occupied mentally and physically. We should keep ourselves well-in-hand emotionally, for emotions are a great force, but must be controlled before they can be utilized, otherwise they will lead to our destruction.”

“What is cosmic consciousness? It is the actualization of the relation which the part bears to the whole.”

“We have been under the impression that from external conditions we can develop inner states of consciousness. This is the master spell which is an illusion or *maya*. Our entire thought life has been rusting under the vitiating, poisoning effect of this idea. This is the poison seed which has developed the mighty tree of *maya*. To pluck it out, we must draw inwards and realize that inner states of consciousness wield an evermoulding influence upon matter and hew out ever varying forms, just as the image projected upon the specular screen of a magic lantern is really determined by the slide in the lantern. Change the slide images and you have other images on the screen. Change the thought in your mind and you change the form materialized thereby. Influence the lower self from this standpoint and your thought life shall take on newer, more beautiful forms – which in reality form the grand and noble stuff composing the life of every highly evolved soul. The Self has de-hypnotized itself from the illusion of forms. It has found its place in life, sees itself as the principle of life and is free and immortal.”

“The way is long; yet despair not, awake, arise and stop not until the goal is reached.” (Katha Upanishads)

"Life is a constant accumulation of knowledge. The vast majority of humanity are the pushed and a few are the pushers. The latter class have learned to grip the good in everything and turn it to account. Some have lived to purpose in the world of matter, some in that of Spirit. They do not seek, but are sought after; do not weep but are wept for; do not want but are wanted. They have gripped this lesson: knowledge is power and power moves the world. They have acquired knowledge by inner concentration upon certain problems and then applied the same with a cautious, a straight aim, and they have hit the mark. Such indeed is the result of the right exercise of knowledge."

"The first duty of the initiate is to guard against the 'source of evil' – which is really the sense of self-righteousness and the exalting of our own personality above that of others. It is refined animalism. It is intellectual pride and egoism. Its climax is black magic, the giant weed. It belongs to the lower part of ourselves, the passionate side of us, from which proceed hatred, jealousy, malice, desire for revenge, self-glorification – and these tend to the setting up of a dividing wall between man and man. We contract ourselves by such practices. We are thereby building up a shell around the soul, which it cannot transpierce. You who take so keen and deep an interest in the forces of nature will, by the study and practice of yoga, in time develop a higher form of consciousness, far above the average of humanity. Naturally this unfoldment will transmute your inner nature into a tower of strength and your mesmeric influence shall gradually circle out from a smaller to an ever larger sphere. This is inevitable. Then comes the crux of the situation. Will you develop a will that is potent with the strength of the All-God? that is flexible at need; rigid at need; ever strong to save and motivated by the highest, the best and the noblest within you? (...) the white magician should never use his powers for the accomplishment of personal ends, thus striking in at the very root of selfishness."

"I want nothing for myself. (...) In the presence of such a man the lion and the lamb shall play together. The most vicious of brutes shall roll in submission at their feet; the most wicked men shall be struck dumb with awe and reverence on the contact with their pure and spiritual aura. Nought out of or in the universe can injure them. This is the great power that shields the yogi in the densest jungles of India. He is a centre of love and power and he knows absolutely no fear. It is the thought-magnetism of such men that brings immediate and complete relief. They are strong as rock. They raise not their hand against anything and nothing can go against them. They are living examples of the law of non-injury. This mighty power of love, compassion and non-injury is deeply embedded in our nature. Encourage it and it shall grow. It is our very nature. After man has run the gamut of all ephemeral and sensual experiences, he falls back upon this heaven of peace."

"Look for the flower to bloom in the silence that follows the storm, not till then. It shall grow, it will shoot up, it will make branches and leaves and form buds, while the storm continues, while the battle lasts. But not till the whole personality of man is dissolved and melted, not until it is held by the divine fragment which has created it, as a mere subject for grave experiment and experience, not until the whole nature has yielded and become subject unto its

higher self, can the bloom open. Then will come a calm such as comes in a tropical country after heavy rain when nature works so swiftly that one may see her action. Such calmness will come to the harassed spirit. And, in the deep silence, the mysterious event will occur which will prove that the way has been found."

"We have to concentrate our attention upon this. The first step to this illumination is love. This is *bhakti yoga*, the religion of love: *Love God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind and with all thy strength. And thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* This is love. He who has lost the self has gained the Self. Then there is *karma yoga*. This is the yoga of unselfish action, service, for the mere joy of it. (...) In *raja yoga*, the mind of man, concentrated inwards, becomes Self-illuminated. The raja yogi is the master of mind par excellence. He sifts the grounds of psychology, develops his mind, purifies, trains and controls his nerves, opens up the centres of force in his body, conveys same into the brain and finally transcends it. He then goes on conquering plane after plane of consciousness till at last there comes a stage when the yogi has achieved all. The eternal pilgrim, man, has trodden the vast cycles of existence and come back home. The son has been united with the Father. *Gnyana yoga* is the yoga of wisdom. Here the intellect is at its best. The philosopher, the logician, the man of reason, have their work cut out for them."

"The whole nature of man must be used wisely by the one who desires to enter the way. Each man is to himself absolutely the way, the truth and the life. But he is only so when he grasps his whole individuality firmly and, by the force of his awakened spiritual will, recognizes this individuality as not himself, but that thing which he has with pain created for his own use, and by means of which he purposes, as his growth slowly develops his intelligence, to reach to the life beyond individuality. (...) Then indeed, and then only he is upon the way."

"You are from another sphere and your soul is seeking to view life from finer sense plates. (...) the physical senses have little attraction for you and your introspective mood implies the stirring of finer sensibilities within you. Your indifference to worldliness is the result of satiety (...)."

"Hold your forces in reserve and turn them into proper channels. We cannot afford to demoralize ourselves by follies."

"Man stands for inner perfection. Our character is the sum-total of our inner unfoldment. (...) Let us consider habit-control, thought-control and self-control."

Swami A. P. Mukerji

"I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer."

Martin Luther

“(…) Every person is impelled by an innate urge – that arises from the depths of their essence of being – to consciously, joyously live forever without limitations. When this desire is so compelling that its fulfillment becomes the primary aim, one is then ready to be fully dedicated to an intentional course of action that will allow their inner qualities and capacities to quickly be fully actualized.

Ordinary human existence determined by provincial ways of thinking and behaving is not fully satisfying and is never spiritually beneficial. Most people are born, aimlessly live for a few decades, and die without having seriously thought about their spiritual well-being or having done anything to be more conscious and freely functional. They experience their brief incarnation as though dreaming and allow circumstances to be determined by their erratic behaviors or random events.

The absolute essence of the one Reality is pure existence beyond space and time, devoid of characteristics. Most of the names that have been used to define or describe it are the concepts of people whose knowledge of it is flawed or who personalize it to satisfy their emotional needs. People who are emotionally mature and intellectually curious tend to welcome information that is supported by valid knowledge about the one Reality.

(…) That which is permanently real can be partially, intellectually known; more clearly known when intuitively perceived; and fully known by having direct experience of it.

(…) To merely acquire information about the facts of life is not redemptive. What is needed is accurate perception of what is observed, and the unveiling of innate knowledge that will spontaneously emerge as a revelation from the innermost level of your essence of being.

(…) You came into this world from deep, inner space and to it you will eventually return. You did not come here to merely complacently exist for a few decades, satisfy mundane desires and needs, enjoy a few personal relationships while they last, struggle to survive, cope with problems and random events, and depart without being conscious of your real nature and relationship with the Infinite. You are here to skillfully relate to the physical environment, improve your intellectual and functional capacities, live effectively with a well-defined sense of purpose, and quickly awaken through the remaining stages of your spiritual growth.”

“The four primary aims to have actualized are:

(1) *To live in harmony with natural laws with a clear sense of meaningful purpose.* You can do this by effectively using your knowledge and skills while allowing the inclination of supreme Consciousness to support and provide for you. All of your thoughts and actions will also be fully supportive of others who are influenced by what you do.

(2) *To have your life-enhancing desires easily fulfilled.* Desires can be satisfied by performance of productive actions and by using imagination and intention to produce and attract ideal events and circumstances. Your mind is a unit of cosmic consciousness which is responsive to your mental states, thoughts, feelings, and intentions. Firmly believe that you can do what you want to do, experience what you want to experience, and have what you need or want to have. Do what can be done to satisfy life-enhancing desires. Cosmic mind and impulses of grace will do what you cannot do.

By attentive experimentation, acquire knowledge of the physical, mental, and spiritual laws of cause and effect: the procedural principles applicable in their domains or fields.

Physical actions produce physical effects.

Thoughts, desires, imagination, beliefs, and intention can cause effects and attract events and circumstances.

Your awareness of your relationship with the Infinite attracts fortunate events and circumstances.

(3) *To have a continuous flow of material resources to satisfy your needs and enable you to accomplish purposes that are of value.* Avoid thinking that there is a difference between spiritual and material realities. Be receptive to the good fortune that can be yours.

(4) *To be fully Self-realized and liberated.* To realize something is to have direct experience and accurate knowledge of it. You will be Self-realized when you experience and know your true nature as it is. You will be God-realized when you experience and know God as God is. When your consciousness is purified, you will be liberated.”

“The two stages of liberation are: (1) being Self-realized while subconscious conditions are still somewhat influential or have the potential to be influential; (2) Self-realization which is not influenced by subconscious conditions or external circumstances, along with flawless knowledge of higher realities.

(...) Many people are satisfied to have enough knowledge of their true nature and higher realities to enable them to be only a little more comfortable, healthy, happy, prosperous, or successful. Truth seekers who are highly self-motivated to be spiritually awake cannot be satisfied with having ordinary states of mind and consciousness or the circumstances that correspond with them. They continue to learn and grow until their right endeavors and God’s grace unveil and bring forth their innate qualities and capacities and they are fully Self- and God-realized.

Every mentally competent person has the capacity to elicit their innate spiritual qualities and wisely express them. What is needed is sincere desire to do it, and steadfast commitment to right endeavors, until the ultimate stage of spiritual growth is fully actualized.

(...) Effective living promotes spiritual growth and spiritual growth promotes total well-being.

(...) Where one is after leaving the body is determined by their state of consciousness and where they can best continue their spiritual growth. The recommended way to leave the body is to do it while meditating superconsciously. Involvements with memories or subconscious influences can then be avoided.

(...) All of the obstacles to spiritual growth can be removed or transcended while incarnated.

(...) The way to think rationally and be emotionally stable is to be Self-aware while dispassionately viewing the contents of the mind and outer events without being unduly influenced by them. When you are Self-aware, you can be serenely discerning. When you are not Self-aware, your attention may be inclined to identify with the contents of your mind and external events.

(...) If your acquired knowledge is valid, wisely use it. Avoid illusions and fantasies. Learn to sleep without allowing your awareness to be dulled or your powers of discriminative intelligence to be impaired. Observe memories as mental impressions of prior perceptions without allowing them to interfere with rational thinking or emotional serenity.

(...) Constructive thoughts, feelings, and actions weaken and remove troublesome subconscious influences. The power to live victoriously is within you. Use will power to discipline thoughts and feelings and develop powers of concentration. Your thoughts will be better organized and your emotions will be more stable when your lifestyle routines are well-ordered. Adhere to regular schedules of restful sleep, purposeful activity, meals, appropriate physical exercise, study of higher realities, and meditation practice. An erratic lifestyle will result in mental confusion, lethargy, low energy reserves, and emotional unrest.

(...) Wisely choose your friends and social relationships. Avoid allowing what others say or do to disturb your inner peace. Established in Self-awareness, speak and act appropriately. Be calmly observant and discerning. Concentrating on useful purposes will make it easier to live as you want to live.

An effective way to control mental and emotional states and states of consciousness is to control how you talk. Avoid frivolous, useless talking. Monitor the thoughts that wander through your mind which may unduly influence your states of consciousness, moods, or behaviors."

"Learn to be fully alert when you are meditating and to stay alert after meditation practice. While engaged in activities and relationships, be Self-aware and cultivate peace of mind and emotional stability. Adhere to holistic lifestyle regimens. Avoid provincial (small-minded) mental attitudes and behaviors:

judgmental attitudes and comments; gossip; excessive curiosity regarding the private behaviors and circumstances of friends and neighbors; rigid personal, political, or traditional religious opinions; and feelings of superiority or pride regarding racial, ethnic, or family history, social status, or personal accomplishments.

You cannot be superconscious, or Self- and God-realized, while allowing provincial, personality-oriented attitudes to influence your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Choose to be spiritually awake. Demonstrate firm resolve by renouncing all Self-limiting mental attitudes and behaviors and rising above ordinary states of mind and consciousness.

Being always happy, optimistic, healthy, mentally peaceful, emotionally stable, creatively functional, and prosperous indicates that your spiritual growth is authentic. If you are unhappy, pessimistic, have frequent physical problems or mental or emotional conflicts, have difficulty doing what you want to do, or lack necessary material resources, bring forth your innate, divine qualities and express them. You are not in this world to merely survive while hoping for conditions to improve or to eventually be Self- and God-realized. Your current incarnation is your opportunity to cultivate and use extraordinary powers of perception and exceptional abilities to freely live as you are meant to live and to fully awaken to Self- and God-realization. If you are not doing this, your sojourn in this world will be neither satisfying nor of spiritual value.

Millions of people are born, wander through space and time as though in a dream, and die without seriously thinking about their relationship with the Infinite or doing anything to know it. Not yet aware of their potential to be spiritually aware, they waste most of their mental powers and vital forces in useless endeavors and temporary satisfaction of meaningless desires.

Imagine the events, circumstances, and relationships that will be for your highest good and either create or attract them. Use your knowledge and skills to accomplish what you want to accomplish. If you have meaningful aims and purposes that seem too difficult for you to accomplish, let the universe help you to accomplish them. Meditate until you are calm and aware of your oneness with the wholeness of life. Before concluding a meditation session, think about how you want your life to be and float your hopes and desires in the Om vibration until you feel fulfilled. You will be inspired with creative ideas, energized, and empowered to perform actions that produce ideal results."

"Spiritual growth is the spontaneous emergence of innate capacities which, in many people, are confined and restricted by ordinary, modified states of mind and consciousness. There is a need to acquire higher knowledge and purify the ego, mind, and consciousness to allow these capacities to be actualized.

Complacent satisfaction with existing circumstances, and allowing thoughts, moods, and behaviors to be influenced by non-useful habits, subconscious tendencies, or the words or actions of others who are similarly inclined, are common obstacles to spiritual growth. For discipleship to be of value, a radical

examination of thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and other conditions that interfere with spiritual growth is necessary. Constructive changes of mental attitudes and behaviors along with intentional performance of effective actions will enable you to experience faster spiritual growth.”

“How to be a dedicated disciple on the spiritual path:

(1) *Discipline your thinking, feelings and behaviors.* Think constructively. Be emotionally calm and Self-reliant. Adhere to wholesome lifestyle regimens and live in harmony with the rhythms of nature. Be compassionate, moral, ethical, and honest in personal relationships. Allow your actions to be directed by the life-enhancing impulses that arise from the core of your being rather than passively allowing them to be determined by habits, moods, irrational ideas, or the words or actions of others whose views and behaviors are incompatible with yours. What you do or experience that enhances your life, continue doing or allow to occur. What disturbs your peace of mind or does not contribute to your overall well-being, avoid.

(2) *Live with a clear sense of meaningful purpose.* While you are incarnated, there are necessary duties to perform and useful purposes to accomplish. Your primary duty is to nurture your spiritual growth until you are Self- and God-realized. Live holistically: harmoniously integrate all aspects of your life while performing actions which allow your spiritual growth to most easily occur.

(3) *Profoundly study metaphysical (higher) realities.* Regularly do this to nourish your mind with positive ideas and improve your understanding of your spiritual nature and your relationship with the wholeness of life.

(4) *Intensively engage in your spiritual practices.* Spiritual practice is intensive when constructive actions are concentrated. Besides superconscious meditation practice, let how you think, feel, work, relate to others, and nurture the environment be your spiritual practice.

(5) *Cultivate a conscious relationship with God.* You can partially know God by using your intellect; more accurately know God by intuitive perception; and completely know God when you are Self- and God-realized. Cultivate constant awareness of the omnipresent reality of God at all times, and your sense of communion with the presence of God will soon blossom as complete realization.

Dedicated discipleship will permanently free you from the conditions that formerly clouded your mind and confined your awareness. Your mental states and states of consciousness influence your thoughts, emotions, actions, experiences, and circumstances. Mastery of attention that you acquire will improve your powers of concentration and enable you to more accurately discern the truth of what you observe. The constructive influences of superconscious states elicited by skillful practice of meditation will purify your mind and clarify your awareness. You do not have to be confined and limited by ordinary states of mind and consciousness during your sojourn in this world.

Until liberation of consciousness is complete, the ultimate Reality may be thought of as a presence with which to enjoyably commune rather than knowing that one is a unit of it. Communion can provide a sense of being anchored in the Infinite, purify the mind, and regenerate the body. For as long as there is a sense of being separate from God, even though a sense of relationship exists, continued contemplation of the reality of God is needed until God-realization is constant. (...) Glimpses of Self- and God-knowing may be had during early stages of spiritual awakening. With sustained aspiration and concentrated endeavor, Self- and God-knowing will prevail during interludes of superconscious meditation and when you are engaged in ordinary activities. (...) Dedicated discipleship will empower you to remove or rise above all obstacles to spiritual growth and quickly fulfill your spiritual destiny."

"The five internal disciplines to be perfected are (1) purity of thoughts and motives; (2) inner contentment in all circumstances; (3) psychological transformation by insightful analysis and elimination of harmful psychological characteristics, addictive tendencies, self-defeating attitudes and habits, delusions, illusions, and irrational or emotional response when painful experiences are remembered; (4) meditation practice; (5) surrender of self-conscious states of awareness to allow Self-knowledge and God-realization to unfold and be actualized."

"Because it is almost impossible for the average person to control mental and emotional states and behaviors by will power, meditation practice is recommended for the purpose of quieting the mind and calming the emotions so that clear states of awareness can be experienced. So long as awareness is afflicted by unregulated mental transformations and constantly changing emotional states, it may be difficult to remove attention from these conditions and experience pure consciousness even with the best of intentions. During alert, focused meditation practice, physical relaxation contributes to emotional calm and mental quietude, breathing becomes slow and refined, body temperature is somewhat reduced, flows of vital forces become harmonized, and concentration is easier."

"Subtle mental states include impulses empowered by restlessness, impulses because of urges to express, inclinations to satisfy needs, desires of various kinds, addictive inclinations, habits, unconscious and subconscious thought processes, memories, and the multitudinous transformations that tend to occur. (...) For awareness to be restored to wholeness, it must be removed from involvement with mental states and from the influences of the qualities of nature."

"Poor physical health or illness; laziness; doubt; negligence; procrastination; philosophical confusion; failure to experience progress; attachments to pleasure or to behaviors, circumstances, or relationships which provide it; misperceptions; and various kinds of mental distractions, are obstacles to effective living and success in meditation practice. When these conditions are influential, they may contribute to thoughts and feelings of grief, anxiety, inability to relax, and irregular breathing patterns, making it difficult if not

impossible to concentrate. If we ardently aspire to Self-knowledge, mental distractions and their effects can be eliminated by devoted meditation practice and contemplation on God. Mental distractions can also be minimized and mental and emotional calm restored by cultivating thoughts and feelings of friendship, compassion, and happiness, and by imagining and contemplating ideal possibilities.”

“Be sure to balance meditative practices with intentional living routines and maintain a keen interest in accomplishing purposes and performing duties. In this way you will avoid becoming so preoccupied with investigating subjective states of consciousness that you lose interest in secular life. When meditating, concentrate completely on knowing the truth about yourself and awakening to God-realization. When not meditating, remain established in Self-knowledge and live skillfully and effectively. It is not necessary to completely withdraw from the world and from activities and relationships to be spiritually free. When we clearly comprehend that we are spiritual beings in a consciousness-energy-manifested universe sustained and ordered by a Higher Intelligence, we can maintain inner realization and live successfully in relationship to the world and its processes.”

Roy Eugene Davis

“Only when faced with the strength of enemies can you learn real inner strength. From this viewpoint, even enemies are teachers of inner strength, courage and determination.”

“The principal source of happiness is inner peace. Someone who has already had practice in developing this peace, who already has a certain experience of it, will not be easily troubled by ordinary enemies. However, hatred, malice, and spite will immediately destroy this mental calmness. (...) External enemies may be real enemies for a certain time, but it is quite conceivable that one day, instead of harming us, they may turn into friends. But the inner enemy will always be our enemy – in the beginning, midway through, and at the end; it is impossible that it will ever become useful to us.”

The Dalai Lama

“The birth of a man is the birth of his sorrow. The longer he lives, the more stupid he becomes, because his anxiety to avoid the unavoidable death becomes more and more acute. What bitterness! He lives for what is always out of reach! His thirst for survival in the future makes him incapable of living in the present.”

Chuang Tzu

“Only by contact with God can there be true happiness for the individual soul. (...) In worldly existence, devotees of Bhagwan are left to be vessels of grace, and nobody else is happy. Only those devotees who desire spiritual contemplation of the Supreme have an experience of happiness – otherwise to all, little by little, only suffering is slowly lived. In worldly existence, nobody is found to be happy. (...) To search for happiness in worldly existence is similar to quenching one’s thirst by collecting drops of dew. (...) Remember this, that whosoever bows in the direction of God, the very same can obtain happiness and peace in worldly existence; otherwise not. (...) But in order to gain His grace, regular effort is required, not only some reading of the greatness of God.”

“Birth as a man means a birth of action. (...) Man certainly endures the fruits of the karma he does. If a man does any action without desiring the fruit thereof, then such cannot be. Righteous duty (*dharma*) destroys sinful thoughts (*paapa*). In case any sinful karma happens, then you should do some holy work for destroying that. By doing repetition of the mantra of Bhagwan’s name, sin is destroyed. (...) This is the manner of the nature of Bhagwan, that those who remember him, their sins are destroyed. Over many lifetimes, the mind has been spoiled; therefore it is difficult to create a love of Bhagwan with a filthy or corrupted mind. But if you will think of Bhagwan, then you acquire Bhagwan’s grace.”

“No one can avoid worshipping. If you don’t worship Bhagwan, then you will fall down worshipping the energetic passion, the nobleman, the merchant and the moneylender. (...) If you will not get help from the greater, then you will fall down and accept assistance from the lesser.”

“Really spiritual salvation and everyday affairs both go together, because by nature one cannot abandon actions. By abandoning actions, it is not possible to maintain the body and get about. But really you should meditate on this that, certainly do those actions for the progress of the body whilst relinquishing the wish to fulfill remaining desires. (...) Therefore doing those actions for the progress of the body, one should apply oneself in the primary consideration of gaining God. Finding satisfaction in anything experienced by the senses is like imagining it is good to scratch an itch. The everyday affairs of the mundane world are similar to becoming entangled in raw threads; really, however much you desire to become disentangled, that much you become entangled. Therefore, performing the business of the mundane existence with prudence, you should set yourself in the topmost wisdom of salvation.”

“The mind is always thinking of insignificant things.”

“This consciousness is slowly extinguishing itself.”

“*Samsara* is not a thing to know; it is a thing to forget. However much you will make an effort to understand this ocean of suffering, that much you will plunge into more and more suffering. To hope for happiness and peace by knowing *samsara* is desiring to search for light in darkness.”

“Don’t love in *samsara*; you should just get going to do your everyday business. In *samsara*, do your daily business in the manner you would do business together with an enemy. Do not make a feeling of friendship anywhere in this. Don’t make an effort to get much understanding of this.”

“Do your daily business, but don’t love in *samsara*. The things of *samsara* are not troubling; one’s own love for them is troubling for oneself.”

“He who has no support in *samsara*, he whose attachment to *samsara* has completely shifted away, the very same is humble. Bhagwan is the supporter of he who is altogether without support.”

[On the ‘negative pull’ of the body, senses, emotions and mind:] “If you are not careful, then you cannot escape falling down. The stream of worldly existence takes a downward direction. The inclination of the senses is opposed to a man, and in opposition, one again falls into the wheel of desires, not considering the suitability. Therefore it is always necessary to be careful.”

“Happiness is not in the things here, nor is peace. By falling for the dazzling effects of light on the eyes of *samsara*, the limitless bliss of the real form of the Supreme is forgotten. Really, by being indifferent to God, you have come to suffer, and that suffering will go away by being in front of Him. As much as you have forgotten yourself in the world of external things, your connection has become confused. (...) Desiring happiness and peace from worldly things, this is like someone desiring light entering a dark cave.”

“Chant worship of Bhagwan – whether the mind is attached or not attached. To build love for Bhagwan is difficult, because for many lifetimes the mind has become spoiled. Sit for chanting prayer. Slowly, slowly, the mind becomes attached; you should not be perplexed. Sit turning the rosary, chanting prayer. If you become attached to sinning, then afterwards the sin will take you away from Bhagwan – this also is certain.”

“Don’t get the mind excessively involved in *samsara*; apply it towards Bhagwan. It is necessary to take action considerably. The body, the mind, the wealth – these are indeed the three. If these three are made use of properly, then you will not repent at the time of death.

If that thing is spoiled therefore, it is spoiled, but now do such that nothing gets spoiled. If you take support from the Veda Shastra, then you will escape from falling. One day, you will certainly go from here; therefore, for the time of going, accumulate some assets that will assist you in the other world.

It is prudent to make good use of a thing. Good use of the mind, that is really thinking of Bhagwan. Thinking of *samsara* is a misapplication of the mind. To apply the body in any benevolence, to engage in worship of Bhagwan, to chant and to do ceremony, is proper use of the body. (...) This is the remembering of Bhagwan; by thinking and singing, the mind becomes pure and has faith in Bhagwan.”

"If the mind becomes satisfied with wealth or is satisfied with a wife or son, then why does it go elsewhere? The mind seldom sustains interest in any one thing. From this it is clear that it is good that the mind does not get attached to anyone or anything in the world. The mind goes to get a good appreciation of anything, but after a little while it shifts on.

In the mundane existence, nobody desires your mind, and the mind is not satisfied with anything worldly.

The mind is not suitable for the world, and the world is not suitable for the mind.

Whenever the mind goes to attain God, then it becomes calm, then it does not desire anything from anywhere. From this, it is understood that God is indeed suited to the mind, and nothing else.

Remember that the mind which is without desire for the mundane existence, the same mind comes to desire to reach near to God. Therefore, in the bazaar of *samsara* and with wealth, do your job and apply your mind in the direction of God; then *samsara*'s business will also proceed, and the way of salvation will also become clear."

"The service of Bhagwan is: doing ceremony, chanting hymns; this is really seizing hold of Bhagwan's foot. If you make Bhagwan your own, then Bhagwan cannot keep away from you."

"Every day, be ready, bedding packed. Nobody knows what time the warrant comes. Death warrant is the arrest warrant for you; there is no scope for appeal. All at once it occurs; you are to leave. Wherever one is, at that very place you will be falling down. If you are ready in the first place, then there will be no suffering at the time of death. He who remains ready to go, from him there will never be sin. Really, it is by overlooking the other world that one becomes wicked and lives sinfully."

"This you should not forget, that one day you will have to go from here. The 'programme' is only to be for this place. Wherever one is, right on that spot you will fall. It will befall you to relinquish everything and travel alone. Therefore don't worry for that which is to be relinquished. However many days there is to stay, live in peace. When this is a certainty that sometime work is not completed, then there is no purpose making a big fuss about jobs. Peacefully going about your everyday affairs, remember God."

"Principally apply the mind in remembering God, and in accordance with the scriptures apply yourself in suitable work for the body and wealth. This world and the other world will both be right."

"Don't let your mentality be attached to an inner love of worldly things. For you, there will be no end to work, staying all the time working. (...) If the enjoyment of the everyday affairs of managing worldly matters is the main desire, then the work increases. It is a dangerous thing to be greedy for wealth or for a woman or

a son. If you have an exaggerated love inside, then you will stay bent in worldliness and you will remain in darkness on the journey in future. Therefore, put the principal amount of love towards God and only the shadow of love in everyday affairs.”

“In earthly things there is not even an iota of happiness. *Samsara* then is really an ocean of suffering. (...) For crossing the ocean of worldly existence, it is necessary to gain knowledge of the Self.”

“From lifetime after lifetime, nourishment is pointlessly coming to this rooted desire. For the purpose of eradicating this desire, a lot of time is to be spent until it is cut off; this can be cut then. Therefore, to calm the interminable lifetimes of desires, a long time of meditation is necessary.”

“The thing fit to be acquired is that which can give happiness or give peace. All things of *samsara* are destroyed in an instant, are having a sad end. The pleasure we get from getting connected with these is as much as the suffering at their loss, and even the effect of the connection becomes trouble-giving. Therefore, there is nothing here to acquire; in *samsara* then, there is nothing fit to be acquired.”

“The whole meaning of the word *samsara* is separation. (...) There is no need to love that which we will definitely be separate from. (...) Don’t become ensnared by the love of worldly existence. Here you will love; then, for many lifetimes, you will weep.”

“Whilst the mind is not satisfied, then the unrest cannot go. Whilst the mind will be caused to miss the way, then that enjoyment of perfect bliss – Bhagwan – cannot be acquired. In the manner that you give small children a plaything as a diversion, so really you people can be diverted by wealth, woman, son, dignity, respect etc. The mind cannot be satisfied on getting these things. The mind expects to get satisfaction from the biggest thing of all. In *samsara*, only salvation is such a great thing; which after knowing, nothing else is fit to be known.”

“Satisfaction comes from discernment: have the desire today, still desire ten years after. When the organs of the senses will be quiet, then a way for discernment exists. By experience, longing for more experience becomes resolute.”

“To get sensory things out of the way, if you come to lean towards *atman*, then enjoyment of the Self is achieved – no enjoyment of sensory things. He whose mind is applied to the sight of God, he will not run to see the cinema. He who becomes a lover of the form of Bhagwan, his eyes will not become attentive in the direction of any worldly form. He who is applied to perceiving the permanent pleasure of touching the feet of Bhagavad, he does not desire the material touch. So in this way, (...) apply the mind in the direction of any form of Bhagwan. Throw yourself into the habit of experiencing the pleasure of contact by service. Learn to make offerings towards Bhagwan.”

“Don’t forget that everyday business is really the way of salvation. If business is done according to the authority as ordained by the Shastras, then it will be an advantage in gaining your goal. If the mind becomes overpowered by things of the senses, in business the order becomes according to one’s own wishes with the boundaries set by the Shastras being violated, then really business will move you away from the path leading to the goal. You will produce misfortune; the reverse of the goal of salvation will be accomplished. Therefore, be constantly remembering the utmost goal.”

“Being born as a human being is said to be the best birth for action. You should not be confused about this form; vigilantly you should do the best work for fulfillment. Undertake your own *dharma* – the greatest work is really to enhance one’s allegiance to God. Make efforts so that a relationship of oneness with God occurs in this lifetime.”

“When worldly existence is understood, then people’s longing for *samsara* will be finished. Once you have gained a good understanding of the true appearance, then there can no longer be any love inside for this. (...) Conduct everyday affairs in worldly life then. Understand this, that this is really only an everyday affair thing, not a thing of loving. If the mind will get trapped in anything here, then it will become laden with a mountain of worries, and life will have no purpose. Therefore attach the mind to God and behave properly in the worldly existence.”

“The world is a *dharmashala* (a stopping house for pilgrims). Four days you remain here; then you proceed further. Don’t get very involved in any of the difficulties in your abode at the *dharmashala*; accomplish the work needed in order to go. If there is anything lacking, then people are not much troubled; considering that they are to stay in the *dharmashala* only four days, then they will be permitted to leave. If arrangements at the *dharmashala* are to be in accord with one’s wishes, then all the time passes in making arrangements, and the work for which he came from his town or village, that he will not obtain.

You should accept that the world is really a *dharmashala* too. Life is a few days; we are not to remain here permanently. For this reason, don’t put a lot of interest in the arrangements of the world; do only that much to get that portion for one’s maintenance. Always remember this, that however many plans you will make, they cannot all be fulfilled. For this reason, in making ‘schemes’, one’s hopes hang by a thread, restlessly thinking about them night and day, ruining this time and to no advantage.

So be resolute in the world. Don’t become too busy on account of earthly tasks; perform everyday affairs as a matter of routine. Set the primary relationship in God. By so doing, you will experience peace in life, and the way ahead will be made clear.”

“Whatsoever you are feeling when you let go of the body, that existence the soul will gain again: *Whosoever he is remembering when the body comes to an end, o Arjuna, he goes to that being that is always being thought of.*”

“Whilst the longing to gain God is not resolutely strong, and for so long as you are in the spin of many habitual tendencies, then in the manner of a kite you will fly – turned about, twisted around, not knowing indeed where.”

“Many threads of desire are gathered. Possessed of desire for God, make ready a thick rope and enable escape beyond the birth-well.”

“Without having a Beloved, all people are orphaned.”

“Humble are you who are altogether without a basis, who anywhere in the material world are not being supported, who are attached to the spiritual existence, whose mind is not connected to anything material, who has through sound, touch, appearance, smell etc. not become altogether attached to worldly pleasures, and whose existence is not supported by anyone else. That life can be said to be genuinely poor and baseless.”

“Like the little drops of water that drip from a cracked earthenware pitcher, the moments of the life are passing. From right now, become careful.”

“Right here, heed that it is the mind’s belief in worldly existence that gives the difficulty. Bow to the direction of the Absolute.”

“You are yourself a part of the Absolute; but out of ignorance, don’t make the mistake of going here and there in the manner of stray dogs wagging the tails, as taking pleasure in worldliness pushes a return experience.”

“Really, by the protection of a principled code of conduct, business and salvation remain bright. If you neglect those restrictions and come to intemperance in your behavior, then salvation is spoiled as well. In truth, the way to salvation is by behaving within suitable limitations.”

“Only God is suitable to be with the mind, and anything else in worldly existence cannot satisfy the mind when it connects to it.”

“The mind was applied to worldly business, but somewhere the mind was applied too much; then again everyday affairs will suffer. Just as you want an envelope to be ‘gummed’. If you apply too much gum, then the envelope will become filthy, and the gum will have gone to no purpose. Mind is similar to gum; it sticks wherever it is placed. In everyday affairs, one’s mind should be applied together with discernment. How much to apply the mind? Essentially, the meaning is really this: apply the mind to everyday affairs a little, and apply it a lot to salvation. In everyday affairs, heed this: that wherever you can, do everyday affairs according to scriptures, and do not apply a very large part of your mind. With the mind inside applied to thinking of God, then everyday affairs will be beautiful too, and you will also make clear salvation.”

"If the senses are always remaining in the running stream of worldly pleasures, then all become idle, no work is done – he cannot make any progress himself, nor can be of any benefit to others. Thinking about things enjoyed by the senses is more detrimental. If anything is enjoyed within the limits applied by the scriptures, then there is no risk of that much loss. But if a portion of the mind is directed to longing, you will remain attached to constantly thinking of worldly pleasure; then the inner Self becomes spiritless and the strength of the mind will become feeble – life will become a burden, and you will not have this world or the other world. Therefore refrain from things perceived by the senses; but more than that, it is necessary to save your mind from things perceived by the senses.

If the mind becomes overcome, if the mind becomes grasped by worldly pleasures, then really life will become dependent on things perceived by the senses. Life dependent on anything perceived by the senses, a subservient life, indeed is giving trouble. If worldly pleasure will remain subordinate to the mind, then worldly pleasures are conquered. In that way, the mind is a conqueror, always remaining in bliss. Therefore become victorious; be independent. Really, in independence, life has a meaning.

Therefore escape from the presence of as much worldly pleasures; and more, defend yourself from thinking of worldly pleasures."

"Being greatly attached is the root of destruction – make an effort to remove attachment. At whatever time there is attachment to worldly life, then at the same moment, bow in the direction of God."

"This statement is indispensable, that it is necessary to divide the use of the mind into that which is of primary and of secondary importance. For the mind, the thinking of God is most important, and some cooperation of the mind is also needed to deal with the subordinate aspect of dealing with everyday business matters."

"Without spiritual instruction, the senses are greedy, and you are creating company with those without discernment."

"The world of surrounding will be made or be damaged according to destiny. About surroundings it is difficult to fix a rule and follow it. But the instruction is to make one's mind able to see all surroundings as similar. When for this reason the mind is not excessively entrapped, then to bow again to God."

"Be knowing that everything of the material world is destroyed. Sunderance from these is certain; understand this loss to be fixed. Thereof is the promise of the gain of lasting happiness and peace, and making effort day and night for profit is ignorance indeed."

"For disciplining the mind, firstly make an effort, and afterwards collect wealth."

"In four days of existence, putting on a show of emotion is not good."

"Who stays ready to let go of mundane existence at any time, never will there be wickedness from him."

Swami Brahmananda Saraswati (Guru Dev)

"Modern man has lost touch with the realm of the sacred and finds it difficult to understand, even disturbing."

"Our material advancement parallels a spiritual fall, a growing loss of the sense of the cosmic being in life, the glory of the universe overflowing in wonder everywhere that the ancients felt, to which we must return to survive as a species."

"There is only one fundamental question: 'Who am I?' Without knowing ourselves, nothing has any validity and our thought must breed illusion. In the inquiry into our real nature is the whole meaning of existence. All else is preliminary or superfluous."

"We have many addictions, which we may call habits and interests, or even skills and talents. Such addictions as drugs, alcohol or gambling are but the most evident forms of the addictive patterns of our entire behavior. Some of us are addicted to sex, others to food, others to business, knowledge, or even religious practices. Whatever we become dependent on to occupy our time or fill our minds is an addiction. All external seeking – whether for pleasure, wealth, status or knowledge – is not essentially different than the alcoholic looking for a drink."

"Thought is our most basic addiction and from it other addictions derive like branches. Thought is a habit, an unconscious mechanism of the mind. If you do not believe this, then try to control your thoughts, try to stop thinking. Obviously thought is not a conscious process but a compulsion. As long as we are ruled by thought we are addicts and our addiction must distort our perception of reality."

"The pursuit of power derives from the separate self. As a separate self we must pursue power because as a separate self we are nothing, a mere point of weakness and alienation. Power does not dissolve this sense of separation but only gives it a false strength."

"It is necessary that we renounce everything. (...) Renunciation means not taking things up in the first place, not trying to manipulate things or force our preconceptions onto life. What we must give up is our personal will to control life. (...) We must be in harmony with the movement of life that clings to nothing. Renunciation is not an intended action of giving something up, but the freeing of the mind from ulterior motives."

David Frawley

"*Wilderness*, in spiritual writings, is often used allegorically to describe the inner silence, enjoyed in soul-communion. In that silence, no cultivated flowers of sense-pleasure bloom. The forty-year journey through the Sinai desert describes the long quest required to attain spiritual enlightenment. In *Exodus*, all who had been born in captivity had to die before the new generation could enter the Promised Land. The meaning, here, is that every characteristic that was born in the 'captivity' of ego-consciousness needs to be transcended. Only soul-qualities, developed in the expansion of divine communion, are able to enter the Eternal Kingdom. The Promised Land described in the Bible is union with God: the land of Cosmic consciousness. Delusive qualities, born of ego-consciousness, are rooted in the consciousness of separateness from God. (...) The Jews in this story symbolize the sincere aspirants in every country and religion who forsake sense-slavery, and commit themselves to realizing the kingdom of God within. As Paramahansa Yogananda often put it, 'God chooses those who choose Him'."

"[The Mahabharata] describes the descent of Spirit into ego and the delusion of separateness – from God, from other egos, and from everything – and the struggle to rise again into oneness with Spirit."

"Deep meditation is a process of 'dying' consciously – with the possibility, however, of returning to the body after meditation and resuming its normal activities."

"He is born blind, as one is, spiritually, when his understanding comes to him only through the senses."

"Circumstances, Paramahansa Yogananda commented, are always neutral. They appear positive or negative according to the corresponding reactions of the heart. The possible reactions to virtually every circumstance are legion in number."

"Psychologically, what happens in any struggle between high aspirations in oneself and one's worldly tendencies is that habit sides with worldliness. Our need is to replace our bad habits with good ones. Good habits, however, yield to a higher power, which is what gives us true strength."

The power to concentrate, shown by Arjuna, and all other good qualities needed for spiritual development, depend initially on good habits. What gives those good qualities their real strength, however, transcends habit; it is a strength that comes from superconscious inspiration. Thus, it isn't so much our good habits that guarantee our spiritual victory as the inflow of divine grace, guidance, and intuition. Meanwhile, the power of habit itself usually ranges itself on the negative side. Indeed, even good habits need to be transformed by divine inspiration; otherwise, if one lacks a higher understanding, he may slip back again into bad habits.

(...) we should not depend on our good habits alone to see us through psychological and spiritual tests. Habit born of past actions may give us good karma, but karma itself must be transcended in dedication to the truth.

Meanwhile, all our qualities assume the characteristics of individual personalities, as we become steeped in them by repetition of the acts that involve us in them. Because of habit, they become entrenched as true citizens of our own nation of consciousness. Each person, as I said, is a nation unto himself. Thousands or millions of citizens mill about, each one bent on fulfilling his own desires and ambitions. Sigmund Freud hardly scratched the surface of human psychology with his investigations. He worked primarily with abnormal psychology, but in truth every human being, so long as he lives in delusion, is a mass of conflicting qualities, or complexes. Freud saw only the conflict between personal desire and the expectations of society. In reality the case is infinitely more complex."

"Every human trait begins as a simple thought. There is nothing man can achieve or even conceive that, as an idea, is inaccessible to any other being."

"A guru is more than merely a teacher. The power of the guru can transfer his magnetism to disciples who tune in to his consciousness."

"Victory over delusion is absolutely crucial to man's true happiness and freedom."

Swami Kriyananda

"A single event can awaken within us a stranger totally unknown to us. To live is to be slowly born."

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

"The nature of everything is illusory and ephemeral,
Those with dualistic perception regard suffering as happiness,
Like they who lick the honey from a razor's edge.
How pitiful they who cling strongly to concrete reality;
Turn your attention within, my heart friends."

Nyoshul Khenpo

"Those, however, who keep aloof from the contacts of life, miss the opportunities of sacrifice, of self-negation, of relinquishing hard-earned gains, of giving up what was dear or what seemed desirable, of service to others, and of the trials of strength in the temptations and ordeals of life. Again: to help others and to help oneself, go hand in hand. The one cannot be without the other."

Lama Anagarika Govinda

"When you wish to pray, you must always turn in recognition to the formless source of Life within. You must recognize it to be the one and only cause and power in your world. This is the meaning of the first statement in the Great Prayer. It is the recognition of the one true God; a recognition that there is no power outside yourself. It is an observance of the first commandment of Moses: *Thou shalt have no other gods before me* (Exodus 20:3)."

"Whatever we do with a bitter heart becomes a bitter thing. All this is not mere poetry. It is science. It is law."

"The world mind is always pouring sensations and impressions upon the personal mind. Ridiculous ideas are all about us every day, impinging upon the receptive medium of our personal minds: fear, sickness, loss, war, accidents, and so on. We take in these impressions without knowing or believing them consciously, and then by repetition we involuntarily believe in the wrong thing and do not know that we believe. We become hooked or hung up on ideas and beliefs not of our own making. We are like a hypnotized man being told that he is weak and not being able consciously to refute the suggestion. He is as weak as he has been told he is."

"Intend the mind toward any subject or render it amenable to any series of impressions and it becomes a compulsive force carrying these impressions into functions and consequences."

"One can never love himself as he ought until he esteems himself in terms of his spiritual heritage – a divinely generated being, destined to win, to achieve, and to express the nature of his source. (...) The master thought for such a state is to remember to *call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven* (Matthew 23:9)."

"The unorganized mind will always be restless until its content is reordered."

"[The average nervous mind] is always restless because of its inner conditioning and its constant amenability to the stimuli of its environment. It flits hither and von all the time in response to the sights and sounds and smells and tastes, and is always eager for more information, even if it hurts."

"The world moves largely by suggestion, and those who can implant suggestion govern those who receive it. Those who are suggested to do not realize that they give their power away through this law."

"The kingdom of heaven is the government of consciousness. It is the authoritative control of the mind and its moods."

"When the mind is spiritually mature, it knows that to possess the internal image is to possess all. The external image will inevitably appear. (...) Don't do anything for which you have not the consciousness. Only the prepared and conditioned consciousness can ensure success in any endeavor."

“Every thought authorizes some action. There is no action without its corresponding thought. That, by the way, is the meaning of meta-physics in the modern sense.”

“All that we are and all that we have are matters of consciousness. To get more, one must be more. What one does not own, one can borrow and use until he makes it his own. When he has made it his own, he has magnified and increased it, and others will borrow from him.”

Ervin Seale

“When you treat or affirm out of the lower level of relative consciousness, your demonstration will always be dependent on your preconceived ideas. You will do your very best to think of ways that your good can be restricted – or you will consider only one channel through which your good can come – and your reasoning mind may tell you that there is no way the good can come today. But when you tune into your Higher Self and take on the Christ Vibration, you are literally moving out of the relative energy and into the energy of the Absolute. And when you speak the word out of this higher consciousness, your subconscious will comprehend the Truth and will establish the patterns on the basis of no limitations, no restrictions, no time element, and no past history. It will operate strictly on the basis of Principle, the Principle of Fulfillment and Abundance that is already your nature. It will accept the spiritual prototype from the Absolute and duplicate that spiritual idea as a mental equivalent – rather than take your preconceived ideas and build sandcastles that will wash away.

When you speak from and as the Absolute, the pattern through which the creative energy of God-Mind radiates is perfect, and as this energy flows through the perfect pattern, it takes on all the attributes of the Ideal and goes forth into the outer world to manifest corresponding circumstances, experiences and form. Spiritual ideas from the realm of Cause are what we are seeking when we pray – *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven.* And this is also the meaning of Psalm 127: *Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.*”

John Randolph Price

“As is one’s thought, so one becomes. This is an eternal mystery.”

Maitri-Upanishad

“Before going to sleep, fill your mind and heart with a thought, an inspiration, a luminous image, and you will wake up in the morning purified and regenerated.”

Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov

“The fragmentation starts with *I*. Out of fragmentation necessarily comes contradiction and conflict. The more ‘knowledge’ there is, the more division there is, the greater the separation from life itself”.

“Thought is not the way to the new. Only meditation opens the door to that which is everlastingly new. (...) the intellect is a fragmentary perception of the whole and meditation is the seeing of the whole. Intellect can operate only in the field of the known and that is why life becomes a monotonous, mechanical routine from which we try to escape through revolts and revolutions – merely to fall back once again into another field of the known.”

Jiddu Krishnamurti

“Apart from the power of mental imprints, phenomena do not exist.

The past has ceased, and the future has not arisen.

Return to this great, primordial place of rest.”

Gyatrul Rinpoche

“Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they find repose in Thee.”

“Go not outside, return into thyself: Truth dwells in the inward man.”

St Augustine

“The most important of all life’s accomplishments is to establish a temple of God in one’s own soul.”

Paramahansa Yogananda

“Herr, lehre uns beten. Lehre mich einsehen, dass ohne Gebet mein Inneres verkümmert und mein Leben Halt und Kraft verliert.”

Romano Guardini

“He that seeks after this world is like one that drinks sea-water; the more he drinks, the thirstier he becomes, until it kills him.”

Al-Ghazzali

"The day is not far distant when humanity will realize that biologically it is faced with a choice between suicide and adoration."

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

"Seek ye first, the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Man's inner life puts his outer life in order, and he can accomplish no more than his God-concept impels."

Manly P. Hall

"Obey God in the things he shows you, and instantly the next thing is opened up. God will never reveal more truth about himself until you have obeyed what you know already."

Oswald Chambers

"There are eternal principles which admit of no compromise and one must be prepared to lay down one's life in the practice of them."

"A perfect mind comes from a perfect heart, (...) the heart which is the seat of God. It is claimed that realization of God in the heart makes it impossible for an impure or idle thought to cross the mind."

Mahatma Gandhi

"Every time you don't follow your inner guidance, you feel a loss of energy, loss of power, a sense of spiritual deadness."

Shakti Gawain

"You know of the disease called sleeping sickness. There also exists a sleeping sickness of the soul. Its most dangerous aspect is that one is unaware of its coming. That is why you have to be careful. As soon as you notice the slightest sign of indifference, the moment you become aware of the loss of a certain seriousness, of longing, of enthusiasm and zest, take it as a warning: your soul suffers if you live superficially."

Albert Schweitzer

"When God buildeth he casteth all down first. He is no patcher."

William Tyndale

"The important stages in a person's life are connected by periods of inner purification so that the individual, being properly prepared and in a clear state of mind, undistracted by customary thought processes and memories, may progress to a new and unburdened existence."

Holger Kalweit

"In His will is our peace."

Dante

"Man is immortal; therefore he must die endlessly. For life is a creative idea; it can only find itself in changing forms."

Tagore

"Only to the extent that man exposes himself over and over again to annihilation, can that which is indestructible arise within him. In this lies the dignity of daring... Only if we venture repeatedly through zones of annihilation can our contact with Divine Being, which is beyond annihilation, become firm and stable. The more a man learns wholeheartedly to confront the world which threatens him with isolation, the more are the depths of the Ground of Being revealed and the possibilities of new life and Becoming opened."

Karlfried Graf von Dürckheim

"Each is drawing from life what he thinks into it."

"The realization that good is universal, and that as much good as any individual is able to incorporate into his life is his to use, is what constitutes the Science of Mind and Spirit."

"To us, as much is possible as we can conceive, according to law."

"When we treat, we do not wish, we *know*. We do not dream, we *state*. We do not hope, we *accept*. We do not pray, we *announce*. We do not expect something is going to happen, we *believe that it already has happened*."

Ernest Holmes

"There are many ways to kneel and kiss the ground."

Rumi

“Build it well, whate’er you do;
Build it straight and strong and true;
Build it clean and high and broad;
Build it for the eye of God.”

Anonymous

“To sum up: the Platonic theory is that education should be primarily moral and spiritual – not mechanical or utilitarian – having for its ultimate end the ascent of the soul to the Supreme Good; that the specific object of education should be the development of moral and intellectual character; that a purely mental education, severed from a moral, and having no reference to true spiritual culture, is not only worthless but positively deleterious.”

Thomas M. Johnson

“True beauty comes from our not-moving mind. In Sanskrit, it is called *Samadhi*. That means deep meditation, unmoving. Samadhi is simply our pure, original nature.”

“Because you attach to feelings or outside conditions, when these feelings or outside conditions change, then your mind is constantly changing, changing, changing. You lose your center.”

“Nothing stays, but everything is always in a process of change. Rather than being some constant, fixed reality, this whole universe constantly appears and disappears. But there is a way to experience the true nature of this constantly changing universe. Simply do not become attached to the opposites world. Don’t become attached to any outside world. Don’t become attached to names and forms. If you keep that point, then your mind is not moving. You attain that names and forms are fundamentally empty. You are completely empty. Nothing ever comes or goes. Nothing ever appears or disappears. When you keep this mind, you soon attain your true self.”

Seung Sahn

“The human form is an invaluable gift. We should avail ourselves of it for the purpose for which it is granted to us. Wife and children, food and drink, we have had in every life. The uniqueness of the human form consists in its ability to realize God as long as it is activated by life. Towards this end we must bend all our energies. This is our real work. The rest is all to no purpose.”

Maharaj Charan Singh

“The mind is susceptible to suggestions. It learns whatever you teach it. If through discrimination you can impress upon it joy and fullness of life in the spirit and the folly of worldly attachments, then your mind will devote itself more and more to God.”

Swami Brahmananda

“Fickleness is the very nature of the mind. But if it is endowed with indifference to worldly things and guided toward yogic discipline, it can be steadied in due course. The reason is that there is a power in the mind that, once it becomes interested in something, it quickly develops a fondness for it. Therefore you should coax your mind and create in it a liking for the bliss of the Self.”

Jnanadeva

“This cerebral system will ruin you, unless consciously you learn to free yourself from it. This secondary powerhouse continually not only spends energy, but damnably interferes with the very creation of energy in the body.”

Pundit Acharya

“If you dedicate yourself to a sublime ideal, your life will continually grow in richness, strength and intensity. It is like a capital investment: you place your capital in a heavenly bank so that, instead of deteriorating or going to waste, it increases and makes you richer.”

“Whether life in itself has a meaning or not; it is up to us to *give* it a meaning. In the hands of an inspired artist a worthless lump of clay turns into a priceless work of art.”

Lama Anagarika Govinda

“One must know that one is ignorant before one can begin to know.”

Sri Aurobindo

“Those who want comfort in life have to seek conformity. The result is false compromise and hypocrisy, and the life without integrity becomes a patchwork.”

Swami Avyaktananada

“Yoga never demands the sacrifice of our reason. It only bids us: use it a thousand times more. Yoga does not require us to give up our active lives. It says simply: act, but know *how* to act. Yoga does not by any means wish us to push our understanding aside. It only tells us: discriminate correctly and act fearlessly. Yoga does not expect us to flee from the world and to retire into the Himalayas. It assures us: the refuge you seek you will never find in the outside world. It is within you. Leave the stormy world of the senses behind you, raise your consciousness to the central point of your being and realize that here alone is the force, here alone is the peace and here alone is the refuge you are seeking. Yoga teaches us: do not condemn the world. Deify the world by your deeds, purify the world by your utterances and ennoble the world by your presence.”

Selvarajan Yesudian

“Practice demands an effort that is prolonged, stretching over a long duration. One cannot expect quick results on this path. There is nothing like instant Yoga. It requires a continuous effort spread over a number of years. Moreover this effort has to be uninterrupted. A spasmodic effort can never lead a person anywhere. (...) The effort must have a quality of cheerfulness about it. Yoga is not a Path of Woe; it is indeed a Way of Joy. If the effort is prolonged and uninterrupted and yet lacks this quality of joy then it is hardly of any worth at all. The effort must have an element of passion about it, for one cannot go to the door of Reality like a skeleton, completely squeezed out. The journey on the path requires great energy.”

Rohit Mehta

“Take a clean and clear glass and throw on it a splash of yellow, or red, and blue, and again of yellow, pink or purple, and green. Such has become your personality over a lifetime of gathering experiences indiscriminately from the morning of childhood to the autumn of old age. Throughout life the only thing we do is paint our minds with such indiscriminate colours.

Personality is not Self. Personality is a composite and an aggregate of many components. The Self is one, unalloyed. The personality is material, the Self is spiritual energy. The personality changes constantly, the Self is unchanging. The personality is transient, the Self permanent. The Self is untouched, unaffected, ever pure, ever wise, ever free. It is neither attracted nor averse to anything and is never in ignorance because its very nature is consciousness. The personality is divided into many levels and planes, from the grossest to the finest, but the Self is indivisible.”

Pandit Usharbudh Arya

“Just as one comes to ruin
Through wrong eating and obtains
Long life, freedom from disease,
Strength and pleasure through right eating,

So one comes to ruin
Through wrong understanding
But gains bliss and complete enlightenment
Through right understanding.”

Nagarjuna

“The indestructible hall of human memory contains two keys. One is made of iron and is called Attachment, the other is made of gold and called Detachment. The iron key opens the door of the house to lower life. The golden key opens the door of the house to higher life. Both the houses are in the unseen physiology of the human personality. At different periods of life, man wishes to open these doors, urged by inevitable impulse and interest.”

“The first thing necessary for Yoga is concentration of purpose. You have so many aims, so many purposes, that you are fritting away your little stock of energy in the attempt to accomplish them all. You are pursuing so many objects not because they are pleasant or profitable in themselves, but because you have neither found out the highest good of your life nor have you trained your will to realize it.”

Sri Ananda Acharya

“The ego is not an entity but an activity. It is a contraction of the field of Radiance.”

Bubba Free John

“You cannot control the mind by forcible discipline; that is, by denying it all that is pleasurable. Discipline of the mind by force is like putting a snake in a covered basket. It will bite as soon as it gets an opportunity. However, if we remove its poison fangs, it becomes completely harmless. Similarly, the poison fangs of our mind, which are lust, anger, greed, attachment and pride or egoism, can be removed only by spiritual practice.”

Maharaj Charan Singh

“Divers search in the ocean for pearls; they don’t find them every time. They may have to dive twenty or thirty times in the deep sea to get them – and even then they don’t always succeed. Sometimes they may not find certain pearls for years, although the pearls are there. The diver is doing his duty, but he is not getting a reward. Each of us must likewise make repeated efforts in our own life. Always make an effort. But there should be sincerity in it.”

“This is an important secret of life: if you remain idle without doing something useful, your mind thinks scattered and random thoughts, and wastes its energy. Your good thoughts should definitely be brought into action. (...) He who is great, successful, creative, and dynamic knows how to bring all his good and creative thoughts into action, and how to give a shape and form to his creative thinking process.”

Swami Rama

“By this constant intake of spiritual ideas through daily study, gradually there comes about a process of mind-transformation. The old mind is gradually eliminated and a new mind is created within you, a new mind which always thinks spiritually, which always is in a state of awareness.”

“You have to rise above sex – not wrestle with it, but rise above it. Because, if you do not have an overall concentrated urge or ambition in life, then the clamour of these little senses becomes a great din in your life. Your life will always be under that clamour. But, if you have got an overwhelming urge for something else, then this clamour does not reach you at all, because you are too busy engaging your entire attention in some other direction.”

Swami Chidananda

“Ego can take many different forms and shapes. It is like the hydra. You cut off one head and another head replaces it. You cut off that head and you see a third head and a fourth head, ad infinitum. This is because in the manifest dimension, ego identity is the root of life, and if that ego identity is lost, then life as we know it no longer exists. It exists as light; life becomes light.”

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

“The ego is nothing but memory, a set of definitions which are limiting. You strongly believe in these patterns you have yourself brought about and you mechanically repeat them. It is only habit that maintains them, makes them seem permanent. Let them go once and for all.”

Jean Klein

“One must gradually whittle away the ego, as though one is chipping at a piece of stone till the stone no longer exists – bit by bit.”

Swami Gitananda Giri

“Work and worship must go hand in hand. It is very good if one can devote oneself solely to spiritual practices. But how many can do that? Two types of men can sit still without work. One is the idiot, who is too dull to be active. The other is the saint who has gone beyond all activity. Work is a means to the state of meditation. Instead of working for yourself, work for the Lord. Know that you are worshipping the Lord through your work.”

Swami Brahmananda

“Untruth is the breeding ground of all sin. There is nothing more unclean than untruth. Untruth has a wonderful capacity to vitiate all your life. Before you know it untruth brings you face to face with fear. Untruth is very proficient in giving rise to endless complexes, evils and diseases without your ever knowing anything about its processes. Untruth lands you in folly, fear, hypocrisy and false pride. Anyone who gives quarter to untruth even once will find that all sorts of impurities will enter into him by the backdoor. So the foundation stone of the spiritual endeavour is purity of life and purity means truthful behavior.”

Vimala Thakar

“In the course of spiritual growth, all of our concepts, ideas, and beliefs have to be investigated and re-evaluated over and over again. What you are thinking now may hold no value in three months or three years. You will have grown, your awareness will have increased, and your level of understanding will have risen. From being a sleepwalker, a hypnotized or conditioned person, you gradually become a person who is aware.”

“Humility and gratitude go hand in hand. The feeling of gratitude is an interaction between the mind and the body. Both will benefit from it. Awareness increases so that we become grateful for everything we are given. We have to learn, literally learn, to be grateful for what we receive day by day, simply to balance the criticism that, day by day, we voice because of powerful emotions.”

Swami Sivananda Radha

“The method to diminish our afflictions is meditation.”

Geshe Jampa Gyatso

“The best response to negative emotion is to allow it to self-liberate by remaining in nondual awareness, free of grasping and aversion. If we can do this, the emotion passes through us like a bird flying through space; no trace of its passage remains. The emotion arises and then spontaneously dissolves into emptiness.

In this case, the karmic seed is manifesting – as emotion or thought or bodily sensation or an impulse toward particular behaviors – but because we do not respond with grasping or aversion, no seed of future karma is generated. Every time that envy, for example, is allowed to arise and dissolve in awareness without our becoming caught by it or trying to repress it, the strength of the karmic tendency toward envy weakens. There is no new action to reinforce it. Liberating emotion in this way cuts karma at its root. It is as if we burn the karmic seeds before they have an opportunity to grow into trouble in our life.”

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

“I don’t think any sensitive person can be satisfied with having fun, no matter how much of it we may cram into our lives. Our need is not for pleasure but for joy – a deep sense of fulfillment that not only never leaves us but actually increases with the passage of time. Joy comes from giving our time and love to a purpose greater than ourselves.”

“Just as the body is made of food, the mind is made of the sense impressions it takes in. And just as there is junk food, there are junk experiences and junk thoughts – attractively packaged, but most debilitating for the mind. Training the senses means that we need to be discriminating about which impressions we allow ourselves to take in.”

Ekhnath Easwaran

“Desire for the world is like coal. Desire for God-realization is like a diamond. Worldly desire can be transformed into spiritual desire, just as mere coal is transformed into diamonds, when a constant effort is directed to control *kama* (desire) and to redirect it in a proper way.”

“Detachment is like flying high: the higher you fly, the wider a landscape you are able to view. But when you are unable to fly beyond the limited realities of your daily life, you are like a person who is confined to a narrow cell, unable to enjoy the expansion of nature. (...) True detachment from the world becomes possible when there is increasing attachment to the Divine Self within one’s heart.”

Swami Jyotirmayananda

“Look about you anywhere and you will see people tapping their feet, twiddling their fingers, twisting their mouths, chewing gum, chain-smoking, pacing restlessly, indulging helplessly in dozens of nervous habits and useless actions which merely waste the life-force so that it is not available when needed. Much of this is, of course, the expression of fear, anxiety, anger and other unhealthy mental and emotional conditions. People who practice the self-control which Yoga teaches impart a feeling of controlled energy. They are efficient; they go about their work with a minimum of effort, with no wasted energy and few unnecessary movements. They seem to get straight to the point and are always ready to take quick, forceful action when they have to.”

“Yoga classifies individuals as ‘sleeping’, ‘awakened’, or ‘enlightened’. The ‘sleeping’ man is not aware that he is using only a fraction of his great potential power. He plods his way through life in a conditioned hypnotic state as a prisoner of his ordinary mind and his five senses. He may be ‘successful’ in all of the ways of the world. He may appear to be a man who is ‘happy’ and ‘satisfied’ in the ordinary sense of the words. And yet, if he has not been able to perceive what lies beyond his senses and has been unable to transcend his ordinary mind, the Yogi will say that this man is ‘asleep’.

The ‘awakened’ man realizes that he is not using his great reservoir of potential resources. He knows instinctively that there are powerful forces available to him if he can but learn how to utilize them. The ‘awakened’ man is intuitively involved in attempting to contact and use his dormant power.

The ‘enlightened’ man is the ultimate objective of Yoga practice. He has aroused his latent forces and controls them; he has transcended his ordinary mind and is able to integrate himself with the Universal Mind. As such, he is no longer affected by the fears, anxieties, and weaknesses of people still in bondage to these things.”

Richard Hittleman

“Sheer poverty never made anyone more peaceful; extreme but voluntary austerity is often the flip side of extravagance. The mark of successful detachment from possessions is not how few of them we have around us, but how little space they occupy in our minds.”

Maggie Kramm

“The harder we struggle against our negativity, the more energy we give it and the stronger it becomes. The only way out is to watch. Maintain your stance as a witness.”

Aruna Bhargava

“Tranquility should not be confused with passivity or apathy. It is, rather, a dynamic quality of balance and harmony. As love is the outward flowing of energy in selflessness, and joy is the experience of accepting the natural divinity of all life, tranquility is the experience we have when we know and accept ourselves for who and what we are.

We are the source of our own turmoil. The inner doubts, fears, impulses, the unconscious drives and motivations, all create an imbalance that leads to mental and physical suffering. We remain unaware of our spiritual identity and are caught in habits and patterns of the personality. The habits that make up this small self control us, and we bounce whenever and wherever the habits bounce, nearly always reacting to the world, with little capacity to consciously choose our actions in the world. When, through meditation, we come to experience directly our true spiritual identity, the personality with all its peaks and valleys no longer exerts a claim. We experience an inner calm and tranquility, a center that is secure and free of conflict. From the vantage point of this calm, unattached center, we gradually resolve our inner conflicts and unfold the subtle potentials of the deeper mind.”

“Although we cannot really stop the process of I-making, we can disengage a certain part of ourselves from it and observe it. And when we learn to observe our thought patterns, we find that the conscious mind begins to change. A different sense of *ahamkara* comes into being – a different sense of ‘I’ is watching, witnessing, dispassionately observing, so are there differing varieties of I-ness, and now we realize that in addition to the ‘I’ who is being the typical me, there is another ‘I’ who is watching it all.”

Rudolph Ballentine

“Remember, Yoga practice is like an obstacle race: many obstructions are purposely put on the way for us to pass through. They are there to make us understand and express our own capacities. We all have that strength, but we don’t seem to know it. We seem to need to be challenged and tested in order to understand our own capacities. In fact, that is the natural law.”

“If I know how to have a proper relationship with everything, everything is fine. It’s my improper relationships that bring me problems, bring me enemies, likes and dislikes. (...) And that lesson you learn only by living in the world – getting tossed, fried, roasted. (...) Maturity comes only in the field. There you face challenges. Facing challenges brings you inner strength. Life is a challenge.”

Swami Satchidananda

“God is the vast Self-awareness, or consciousness, that is the subtle essence of all things. (...) this pure, undifferentiated awareness expresses itself as individual conscious events. It is here that the sense of ‘I’ begins. Each ‘I’ (...) becomes conscious of itself, or self-aware. It comes to perceive itself as separate and distinct from the surrounding atmosphere and becomes aware of other ‘I’s around it. Here begins our sense of ego.”

“Yearning is a part of the beginning of anybody’s practice. You have to yearn to grow. You can’t want it one day, but not the next, and expect to make any real progress. You have to begin with some steady, inner hunger.”

“Pain is your best friend. It is infinitely more honest with you than pleasure. (...) the painful experiences you have had benefit you far more than the pleasurable ones. (...) when you can center yourself and be open to look pain dead in the eye, then you have transcended the limits of your ego and this humanity. It is then that you enter into the possibility of becoming a great being.”

“Your work really begins when you release struggle. To let go of struggle initiates a change of vibration within you. This change puts you in touch with the flow of Life Itself, which is essentially what you are. To cultivate your awareness of this flow is your real work. When you’re in touch with the flow of Life and feel your heart and mind open, you’ll note that a certain presence starts to assert itself. This presence changes your physical chemistry, your feelings, and your mind. It is the spirit itself, starting to inform you about yourself, about it, about Life, and about God.”

Swami Chetanananda

“The mind requires daily inspiration. The conception behind the word ‘inspiration’ is ‘something breathed in from above’, not from the physical sky but infused transcendently into a man’s mind: something good, beautiful and true, giving guidance to each individual in his walk of life.”

“The mind is like a bird in a field, always pecking at and picking up something; what is important is that it should select wisely. All that the senses report is woven into something which tends either to destroy or to build up the mind, for the mind assimilates that upon which it dwells.”

Hari Prasad Shastri

“We must live in the now to follow the path to enlightenment. In the lower realms of the mind, where time and space seem very real, we are worried about the past or concerned about the future. These two intermingle and limit conscious awareness.”

Satguru Sivaya Subramaniaswami

“When the goal of life is attained, one achieves the reparation of all wrongs, the healing of all wounds, the righting of all failures, the sweetening of all sufferings, the relaxation of all strivings, the harmonizing of all strife, the unraveling of all enigmas, and the real and full meaning of all life – past, present, and future.”

Meher Baba

“You must be firmly rooted. Such is the first law. Then grow and assert yourself. (...) Be deep, wide, tall, truly a Tree of Life.”

“You must learn to welcome consciously the most unexpected events of life, to be entirely transparent in front of them, without any motive or judgment.”

Lizelle Reymond

“Energy leaks through the mouth by idle talk, gossiping, censure, scandal, mongering and all sorts of useless worldly talks. (...) People do not understand the value of energy. They waste it very carelessly. They squander it like a profligate son. They repent and become weak in their old age. It is too late to gather honey in the winter.”

Swami Sivananda Saraswati

“If you have never reached the bottommost depths of despair, if you have not realized some point in your life at which you felt completely disintegrated, then you haven’t begun your journey towards God yet. But immediately upon that disintegration, when everything you value in life is gone, there should be surrender. The cup of your personality shatters, and at that moment of shattering you surrender your will completely to the unknown, whoever the unknown is, and right there, by that very act, you have found the perfection that is God.”

Pandit Usharbudh Arya

“Youth is not a time of life – it is a state of mind. It is not a matter of ripe cheeks, red lips and supple knees. It is a temper of the will, a quality of the imagination, a vigor of the emotions. It is freshness of the deep springs of life. Nobody grows old by merely living a number of years. People grow old only by deserting their ideals. Years wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul.”

Swami Bua

“Student: Sometimes I become quite discouraged in my Sadhana (Yogic practice), and I seem to waver in my thinking and commitment. I also feel that since I have started walking the spiritual path I am facing many more trials and tribulations and even mental conflicts than ever before. Yet, I thought that Yoga was supposed to produce peacefulness and mental serenity. Can you tell me what is happening to me?”

Swamiji: You are simply becoming more sensitive and paying the price for that sensitivity. Everything that is happening to you now was also happening to you before, but you were so underdeveloped, so coarse in your awareness, that you were not as acutely conscious of it as you are now. Since you are becoming sensitized, you also are becoming more critical of your own life. Mistakes and failures and character flaws which you have carried all your life without caring much about them suddenly loom up clear and ugly before you, exposing themselves in the light of your newly developed awareness. As your Sadhana develops, you will develop the quality of Sthiti Prajna, that is, the state of steady wisdom, and you will be able to see yourself and your thoughts and actions clearly without feeling either pride or disgust, pain or pleasure at awareness. Vairagya, or detachment, rises naturally with extended Sadhana, and this detachment will allow you to view yourself without succumbing to depression and other negative emotions.”

Swami Gitananda Giri

“In all your actions, in all your words, in all your thoughts and feelings, be filled with enthusiasm and sing God’s glory.”

Swami Chidvilasananda

“We are fragmented into so many different aspects. We don’t know who we really are, or what aspects of ourselves we should identify with or believe in. So many contradictory voices, dictates, and feelings fight for control over our inner lives that we find ourselves scattered everywhere, in all directions, leaving nobody at home. Meditation, then, is bringing the mind home.”

Sogyal Rinpoche

“The art of archery is to draw the arrow back as far as possible and then to release the arrow, sending it ahead with great force. Likewise, the mind should be drawn back to the source of thinking and, from there, released to bring the thought out in a forceful manner supplemented by the power of the Being. It will bring out a powerful thought that will succeed in the relative world, bring the infusion of the being into outside activity, and make possible the state of cosmic consciousness.”

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

“During the day do not do one thing while thinking about another. Thought and action must be unified – no thought be permitted without reference to action or intended action; and no action be performed without intention. By this practice all day long the mind and body are taught to act together, without any waste of physical or mental energy.”

Ernest Wood

“Desire is necessary to human life, and the spiritual desires do not extinguish desire, but only give it another and higher direction.”

Paul Brunton

“Having abandoned the notion of self, the sage is free from clinging. He does not depend even on knowledge. He does not engage in controversy. He holds no dogmatic views.”

Sutta-Nipata

“The human body is not a thing or substance, given, but a continuous creation. The human body is an energy system which is never a complete structure; never static; it is in perpetual inner self-construction and self-destruction; we destroy in order to make it new.”

Norman O. Brown

“The only true happiness comes from squandering ourselves for a purpose.”

William Cooper

“You’ll be calm the day you learn to sit alone and do nothing.”

Maxime Lagacé

“I close my eyes in order to see.”

Paul Gauguin

“Religion is for people who are afraid of going to hell. Spirituality is for those who have already been there.”

Vine Deloria Jr

“The fundamental dissatisfaction of human beings [suffering; the inability to remain happy] has been the central concern of all religious and philosophical systems.”

“The Buddha discouraged his followers from depending on anything external: leaders, dogmas, beliefs. Nor would he expound comforting metaphysical theories; he held that these were irrelevant. Instead, he presented his pupils with a straightforward and rational analysis of their predicament. He pointed out that all things are impermanent; that our lives are short, restricted and, ultimately, unsatisfying.”

“The Buddha lived at a time when the Vedic rituals were no longer a unifying force in the society. They had become a religion of outer trappings, mere ritualism and empty speculation. In the ruins of the Vedic civilization, the first followers of Buddha inaugurated the religion that was to irradiate almost all southeast Asia and the Far East.”

“Though the details of the myths differ with time and place, their pattern is the same. First comes the initial challenge, the call to a fuller life, the promise of a new state of being. If the hero has the courage to accept the challenge, with all its awesome implications of metamorphosis, he embarks on the crossing of the initiatory threshold that marks the beginning of the journey. This death and rebirth will have to be repeated many times before the quest is accomplished, for there are trials and dangers to be encountered on the way, and every transformation suffered is a dying to the old and a resurrection into the new. Such traveling requires fortitude and perseverance. The decisions to be taken are not easy – the unwary are soon tranquilized by triviality; the song of the sirens is alluring, and for every Galahad there are countless Lancelots.”

“Life in Vedic India revolved around the necessity of maintaining contact with the myriad celestial energies that uphold the universe. These are the *devas* – ‘the shining ones’. This contact was essential to preserve the harmony of the cosmic hierarchy in which the human realm is only one among many. The way to sustain this universal order was twofold: through the performance of sacrificial ritual and the practice of yoga. The *Vedas* reiterate that, if the cosmic order is disrupted and the harmony between the various planes of creation broken, then suffering is the inevitable result.”

“As a practical and nonritualistic way to expand awareness, yoga was considered a vital means of ensuring individual evolution. (...) Yoga was the way for any individual, no matter what his social role, to purify his consciousness and live the full depth of life. (...) In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna emphasizes that yoga is essential to bring harmony and success to daily life. He describes it as ‘skill in action’, presenting it as a practical discipline suitable for all people; a middle way that avoids the extravagances of ascetism on the one hand and sensuality on the other. (...) The word *yoga* means ‘unity’. (...) Yoga is a way to restore our lost wholeness, our integrity as complete human beings, by unifying the personality around a center that is silent and unbounded.”

“The techniques of yoga are methods of purifying the nervous system so that it can reflect a greater degree of consciousness. (...) If these techniques are correctly practiced, the whole nervous system is revitalized – the body enjoys better health and more energy; the rested mind is freed from the burden of past experience; and perception is restored to its primal freshness. Thought and activity become coherent and integrated; life becomes richer and more fulfilling.”

“The ultimate goal of the Christian life is union with God through loving contemplation.”

“The word *sutra* means ‘thread’. As a literary style, it is an aphorism for extreme brevity. (...) the *sutras* are almost like lecture notes, mnemonics. Each *sutra* resembles a knot of the finest thread that must be teased out and unraveled, so that every inch of its meaning is displayed. Only then can the whole fabric of the teaching be woven together.”

“Texts like the *Yoga Sutras* are views from the mountaintop. Their purpose is to encourage and guide us, the climbers, to share their panoramic view. But the climb can only be accomplished in stages. Realizing this, teachers have often clothed their wisdom in parable, analogy, and provisional truth. (...) It is particularly important that the truth be unfolded gradually when what is being conveyed is not knowledge in the normal sense, but the transformation of consciousness itself. The teacher must apply *upaya* – ‘the skillful method’; he must teach on the level of the student’s ability to understand. Otherwise his words may be recognized intellectually, but their meaning will not be grasped. Yoga confirms Blake’s observation: ‘The fool sees not the same tree the wise man sees.’ ”

“The experience of the mind’s dissolving into the Self is not the same as Enlightenment. Enlightenment is the state when this unbounded awareness is maintained at all times, during the states of waking, dreaming, and sleeping, no matter what the body and mind are doing. Just as it takes time for the mind to experience clearly the process of becoming boundless, it takes time to integrate this expansion into everyday life so that it is never lost. Enlightenment comes from the alternation of the completely settled mind and ordinary activity. In this way, the Eternal gradually infuses the world of time.”

“In the ancient world, philosophy was considered a specialized study that led to a higher state of being. (...) The primary concern is not information, but transformation. Philosophy is a means to Enlightenment. (...) A philosopher was expected to lead an exemplary life, a life of higher consciousness. The worth of his conclusions was judged by the extent to which his life mirrored his teachings. Plato demanded equally high standards from his Philosopher King, one who, living ‘in constant companionship with the divine order of the world, will reproduce that order in his soul, and, so far as man may, become godlike’.”

"It is axiomatic in the yogic tradition that 'knowledge is different in different states of consciousness' (*Rig Veda*). In other words, our level of consciousness completely determines how much of the truth we see in any given situation. The clearer our minds, the more correctly we evaluate our experience. The state of Enlightenment is said to be complete knowledge, because it is based on the unchanging experience of the knower – the Self. Until this state is reached, any knowledge is ultimately baseless, because it depends only on the mind, which is a prey to passing moods and general instability. Patanjali categorizes everything that changes as 'an object', in contradistinction to the one unchanging subject, transcendental consciousness."

"In the growth to full Enlightenment, there are three successive and distinct stages. The first stage is to realize who and what we really are, for without self-knowledge, how can we hope to understand the outside world and all that lies beyond our little self? True self-knowledge is to have the immortal, transpersonal Self permanently established in our awareness. Then the surface of our life, our individual mind, is united to its base, the cosmic Self, which is experienced as an unbroken substratum of subjective awareness – 'I AM'. No matter what else is happening in our experience, the Self is there as an undisturbed witness. When this level is clearly experienced in deepest meditation, there is what is called Self-realization; when it is lived continuously through the transient states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep, there is the first stage of Enlightenment, technically known as Cosmic Consciousness (*turiyatit chetana*). The characteristic of Cosmic Consciousness is that there is a separation experienced between the inner, spiritual reality of the Self – silent, unmoving, utterly stable – and the ever-changing activity of the outside world. Cosmic Consciousness is described in the literature of yoga as *jivanmukti* ('liberation in life'). (...) *Jivanmukti* is eternal freedom, but it is freedom on the basis of a radical duality – Self and other; it is not yet the glory of full Enlightenment. The second phase, which begins to resolve this existential duality, is the state when the infinity of the subjective Self begins to be infused into the objective, relative world, illuminating it in the celestial light of divine order. This stage, the experience of which has given rise to the theistic, devotional teachings in the great traditions, is technically known as God Consciousness (*bhagavad chetana*). (...) The third and final stage, the full maturing of Enlightenment, is when the unbounded Self overflows, as it were, into the bounded world of time and space, and everything – all objects, all experience – is perceived as nothing less than the unbinding and temporary modification of that one infinite Radiance which is my Self. All previously held opposites are transcended: The relative is the form of the formless Absolute; the limited world of matter is but the expression of the infinite Spirit; and Eternity is lived through all the passing phases of time. (...) Unity consciousness (*brahmi chetana*) is the highest state, the pinnacle of evolution, when the individual lives in, and as, the very Divine."

Alistair Shearer

"The Scriptures, the Truth and the Faith proclaim that sin is nothing but a turning away on the part of the creature from the unchangeable Good toward the changeable. This is to say that the creature turns from the Perfect to the imperfect, to separateness, to the partial, and preeminently to itself. Note that when the creature assumes for itself some good thing, like being, life, knowledge, power – briefly, everything one might term good – as though the creature *were* indeed one of these goods, or as though the Good *belongs* to the creature – in such situations, the creature is turning away from God. Was that not what the devil did? What else did his apostasy and fall consist of but that he assumed for himself that he, too, was something, and that something was his, and that something was his own property."

"It is better that God and things divine be known, loved, and praised even if the worshipper should vainly think that *he* produces the love and the praise – as though God would otherwise remain unpraised, unloved, unhonored, and unknown. For when the illusion and the ignorance turn into a realization of Truth, the assumption that the Good comes from us will disappear of its own."

"A master, Boethius by name, says that the fact that we do not love the best stems from a defective condition. He is right. (...) what is truly the noblest and best should also be the dearest, and for no other reason than the fact that it is the best and noblest. Man should order his life accordingly both with respect to the external and the internal."

"(...) Christ's inner being, its vision through the soul's right eye, always participated in full measure in the divine nature, in complete bliss and joy. But the outer man, the left eye of His soul, was involved in a full measure of suffering, distress, and travail. Yet this took place in such a way that the inner, right eye remained unmoved, unimpeded, untouched by all the travail, suffering, and torment that the outer man had to deal with."

"(...) as long as the soul has its gaze on bodily and temporal things, on created objects, and is consequently filled with images of this varied world, eternal life cannot be grasped. If the soul is to gaze or look into eternity, it must become chastened and empty of images, and detached from all created things and, above all, from the claims of self. (...) the experience is indeed possible, and it may well occur so often in a person's life that he becomes accustomed to looking into and seeing eternity whenever he so desires. And the glance is like no other. It is nobler, dearer to God, and worthier than anything that the creature can do as a creature."

"We should note and know what is the simple truth, namely that no virtue and no good action, not even the confession that God is good, can make man and his soul virtuous, good, or blissful so long as it occurs outside the soul. (...) It may be commendable to ask, hear about, and gather information concerning good and holy persons, what they have done and suffered, or how they have lived and how God has worked and willed in and through them. But it is a hundredfold better that man deeply within himself learns and understands the what and the how of his life, what God is working and doing in him, and how God wishes to use him

and not use him. Thus the saying is true: No outgoing was ever so good that a remaining within was not better.”

“Illumined people, living in the true light, perceive that everything they might desire or elect is nothing compared to that which has always been desired or elected by all creatures in the depth of their being. This realization leads them to let go of all desire and reliance on worldly things, surrendering themselves and all to the eternal Good. Yet there remains in them a desire to advance toward and to get closer to the eternal Good, by a deeper knowledge, a more burning love, a greater preparedness and more complete surrender, and a fuller obedience – and this in such a manner that each illumined person would say: ‘Would that I were united with the eternal Good as the hand is part of the body’. (...) The illumined ones live in freedom. This means that they are free from fear of pain or hell. They have abandoned hope of reward or heaven. They live in pure surrender and obedience to the eternal Good, in love that frees. (...) A true lover of God loves Him or the eternal Good equally well in having or not having, in wealth or in want, in sweetness or in bitterness. May everyone search himself in this regard.”

“In the Eternal, nothing is sought, contemplated or loved but this one thing only, obedience to God. One considers as nought everything but this one thing. Now it becomes clear what disobedience is: Man considers himself to be something and believes that he knows and is capable of something, seeks his own interest in the things around himself, is filled with self-love and the like. Man was and is created for true obedience and owes that obedience to God. (...) All disobedience is nothing but resistance to God.”

“Saint Paul spoke: ‘When perfection and wholeness comes, all division and imperfection will wane.’ This means that wholeness and perfection supersede all that appears in part and that all fragments and all imperfect things are nothing when compared with the perfect Whole. All knowledge limited to separate parts will come to nought when the Whole is perceived. When the Whole and the Good are known, one cannot help but long for It and love It. This leads to the disappearance of that other love by which man is fondly attached only to himself and the things of the world. (...) Should this never have been uttered by a human voice, the truth of it speaks nevertheless by its own force, for it is thus in true reality. But as long as man loves the parts, the fragments, and before all himself, and consorts with them and considers this all-important, he is and will remain so blind as to know nothing about God. For he considers as best and dearest what is most useful, comfortable, and enjoyable to himself and to his own.”

“My many words on the subject can be summed up by a few: Cut off your self, cleanly and utterly.”

“When God and man become one – meaning that God does His work in man – everything contrary to God and man is keenly felt and experienced. (...) it is characteristic of created beings and the natural order that they seek, in all they commit and omit, wherever, the advancement of self and the concerns of self.

When a person surrenders and abandons his own self, God enters with His own, that is His self.”

“(…) poorness in spirit comes from the discovery and knowledge of true faith, namely that man is nothing in and of himself and on the strength of his own endowments. He is impotent and unfit for anything but infirmity, vice, and wickedness. (...) Nature and self recoil from the life-in-God and hold to the life of false lawless freedom.”

“When true union with God takes place, deep in our being, the inner man is enduringly rooted in that union. But God lets the outer man be moved every which way, in and to matters that are and occur by the rules of earthly life. (...) The outer man has no ‘wherefore’ or real purpose except to fulfill the eternal Will. It becomes truly acknowledged that the inner man shall stand immovable and the outer man must and should be moved. (...) Where man is of this kind and lives from the divine light, no spiritual pride appears, no reckless freedom, no undisciplined disposition, only a deep humility and a chastised, reflective, contrite mind.”

“Humility stems from the inner recognition made in the true Light that being, life, knowledge, wisdom, and power are truly rooted in God, not in the created world. The creature is of itself and has from itself nothing. When it turns away from true Goodness in will and work, nothing is left but wickedness. It is therefore an undeniable truth that the creature as creature is in itself unworthy, has no real claim on anything; no one is indebted to it, neither God nor fellowmen. The creature should rightly be surrendered to God’s hands, subject to Him. This is the highest and the most important concern in man’s life.”

“All falsehood is rooted in illusion; all deception begins in self-deception.”

“We speak of obedience, of a new man, of true Light, of true Love, and of Christ life, yet it all means the same. (...) You should cling only to that by which you will obtain this life – and to nothing else – so that it may be born and come alive within you. Everything that leads away from it, shun it.”

“You have heard it is said that a person who has all his contentment in God has enough and to spare. This is true. (...) unless a person can see all things as part of the One, and the One as all things, and experience a something and a nothing as the same, he cannot rest in God. But where a person does have such a vision, there comes this satisfaction – and in no other way. Moreover, he who surrenders wholly to God and becomes obedient to Him must have that serene resignation and obedience in compassionate sufferance, which means that he does not resist or defend or evade. If you are not resigned and submissive to all around you within the One as the only One, you have really not surrendered to and begun to obey God.”

"If we harbor love for something particular apart from the One and not for the sake of the One, we do not love God. For in that case we love things that are not of God, we love them more than God. If we love something more than God or things divine, we do not really hold God dear. For God must and desires to be loved alone and, in truth, nothing should be loved but God alone. Where the true Light and the true Love are in a person, nothing but God is loved for there God is adored as Good and for the sake of the Good, all good things as One, One as all good things. Of a truth, all is One and One is all in God."

"One says that self-will is the most widespread commodity in hell. That is certainly true. Hell is and consists of self-will. If there would be no self-will, there would be no hell and no devil. (...) whatever happens guided by your will is contrary to the eternal Will. (...) our works do become adversary deeds when they flow out of a will other than that of God, other than the eternal Will."

"The will lodged in the creature, called the created will, is just as much God's will as what we term the eternal Will, and it is not the property of the creature. So, as God cannot will by work and outward movement without creatures, he carries out deeds through them. The creature should therefore not exert its will in separation, but God alone should – and desires to – express His will in the creature by outward deeds. This will is thus in man, yet it is God's."

"Should someone in the kingdom of heaven claim something as his own, he would be prompted toward hell by his very claim, and he would turn into a devil. (...) In this earthly life man finds himself between heaven and hell. He can turn his will to whichever he chooses. The greater the desire to possess and own, the more hell and wretchedness he will have; the less self-will, the less hell and the closer to the kingdom of heaven. (...) As soon as you hold onto something of your own, or desire to have it, you yourself become owned. But he who has nothing of his own, or does not desire to have and own, is unencumbered and free and slave to no one."

"All that has been written here Christ taught throughout His life of thirty-three and a half years, long in comparison with the brevity of these words: 'Follow me.' It is a brief word, but if you are to follow Him, you must surrender all things, just as everything was surrendered in Him. (...) Furthermore, if you wish to follow Him, you must take the cross upon you. The cross is the same as the Christ life and that is a bitter cross for natural man. Christ says about the cross: He who does not leave all and does not take the cross upon himself is not worthy of Me and is not My disciple and follows Me not."

"Man should guard his self and the things of the self inwardly and outwardly. That is to say, he should, as much as possible, conduct and preserve himself in such a manner that will, desire, love, or thought do not arise and live within him in ways other than those that are God's. (...) At points where one becomes aware that untoward things arise, things are not of God, are not fitting, one would strive to uproot them and withstand them at the first opportunity and as best as one can."

“When something of the perfect Good dawns upon and is revealed to the soul of man, in a glance or in a rapture, as it were, a desire to approach and unite with the perfect Good is engendered in it. As this desire grows, more and more is revealed to the soul, and the more that is revealed, the more that soul yearns and is attracted. In this way a person is drawn into and enchanted by the union with the eternal Good. The Father is the one who draws; man is being taught by the same One who seeks him so that he cannot come into the union except through the Christ life. And now man puts on that life of which we have already spoken.”

“The inward life begins as follows. When man tastes the perfect Being, as far as that is possible in an earthly life, all created things, yes, even his own self, become like nothing to him. As man comes to know the true situation, namely that the Perfect alone is the All above all, it follows of necessity that he must ascribe all good things to the same perfect Good alone, not to a created being: life, being, power, learning, knowledge, deeds and rest from deeds must be ascribed to the highest Good. From this follows also that if man does not claim anything for himself in a proprietary sense, neither life, nor being, neither power nor knowledge, neither deeds nor omission of deeds, indeed nothing one may generally call good, then he becomes poor and is reduced to nothing as a self; likewise reduced is the importance of every single item, which is to say all created beings. Then begins, first of all, a true inward life; from hence onward God himself becomes the person in such a fashion that there is nothing that is not God or things of God, and also so that there is nothing left in man of which he considers himself to be a proprietor. Thus God is at work in man, living in him, knowing, empowering, loving, willing, doing and resting. (...) A good means to enter into life-in-God is to make sure that the best becomes my dearest choice, so that it is a joy to choose the best, abide by it, and become one with it.”

“Now if that which is best should be what we hold dearest and if we are to follow its beckoning, the eternal, only Good alone must be cherished above all and we must hold to it and become attuned to it as much as possible. If you are to ascribe everything good to the eternal, only Good – as we rightfully, truthfully should – we must also rightfully and truthfully attribute to it the beginning, the progression, and the end of our course. By this affirmation we also acknowledge that man and all created beings are nothing in themselves. This is the plain truth; you may say or sing whatever you please. Only in this way can we come to a true inner life. (...) Rightfully and truly, there should be nothing in man that claims anything as its own, nor should man will, desire, love, intend anything but God and the Godhead alone, that is to say, the one eternal, perfect Goodness. (...) when man arrives where he thinks that *he* has accomplished something, it is time to watch out lest the devil sows ashes over it all. (...) This happens to the person who has not gone on nor desires to follow the right path, leading to the right door, that is to say, to Christ, as we have said before, and imagines that one can come to the highest Truth by another path, or thinks this goal has already been attained.”

Theologia Germanica, 1497

"(...) at my entrance into religion, I took a resolution to give myself up to God, as the best return I could make for His love, and, for the love of Him, to renounce all besides. (...) after having given myself wholly to God, that He might take away my sin, I renounced, for the love of Him, everything that was not He, and I began to live as if there was none but He and I in the world. (...) I beheld Him in my heart as my Father, as my God. I worshiped Him the oftenest that I could, keeping my mind in His holy presence, and recalling it as often as I found it wandering from Him. I found no small pain in this exercise, and yet I continued it, notwithstanding all the difficulties that occurred, without troubling or disquieting myself when my mind had wandered involuntarily. I made this my business as much all the day long as at the appointed times of prayer; for at all times, every hour, every minute, even in the height of my business, I drove away from my mind everything that was capable of interrupting my thought of God. Such has been my common practice ever since I entered in religion. (...) by often repeating these acts, they become habitual, and the presence of God rendered as it were natural to us."

"I say again, let us enter into ourselves. The time presses, there is no room for delay; our souls are at stake. (...) Have courage. We have but little time to live (...). We must always work at it, because not to advance in the spiritual life is to go back. But those who have the gale of the Holy Spirit go forward even in sleep. If the vessel of our soul is still tossed with winds and storms, let us awake the Lord, who reposes in it, and He will quickly calm the sea."

"Let us live and die with God. Sufferings will be sweet and pleasant to us while we are with Him; and the greatest pleasures will be, without Him, a cruel punishment to us."

"There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful than that of a continual conversation with God."

"I know that for the right practice of the presence of God, the heart must be empty of all other things, because God will possess the heart alone; and as He cannot possess it alone without emptying it of all besides, so neither can He act there, and do in it what He pleases, unless it be left vacant to Him."

"God will not permit that a soul which desires to be devoted to Him should take other pleasures than with Him. (...) I do not say that therefore we must put any violent constraint upon ourselves. No, we must serve God in a holy freedom; we must do our business faithfully, without trouble or disquiet, recalling our mind to God mildly, and with tranquility, as often as we find it wandering from Him. It is, however, necessary to put our whole trust in God, laying aside all other cares."

"Do not always scrupulously confine yourself to certain rules, or particular forms of devotion, but act with a general confidence in God, with love and humility."

"When the mind (...) has contracted certain bad habits of wandering and dissipation, they are difficult to overcome, and commonly draw us, even against our wills, to the things of the earth. I believe one remedy for this is to confess our faults and humble ourselves before God. (...) Let it be your business to keep your mind in the presence of the Lord. If it sometimes wander and withdraw itself from Him, do not much disquiet yourself for that: trouble and disquiet serve rather to distract the mind than to recollect it; the will must bring it back in tranquility."

"She seems to me full of good will, but she would go faster than grace. One does not become holy all at once."

"I do not pray that you may be delivered from your pains, but I pray God earnestly that He would give you strength and patience to bear them as long as He pleases. Comfort yourself with Him who holds you fastened to the cross. He will loose you when He thinks fit. Happy those who suffer with Him. Accustom yourself to suffer in that manner, and seek from Him the strength to endure as much, and as long, as He shall judge to be necessary for you. (...) Put, then, all your trust in Him, and you will soon find the effects of it in your recovery, which we often retard by putting greater confidence in physic than in God. Whatever remedies you make use of, they will succeed only so far as He permits. When pains come from God, He only can cure them. He often sends diseases to the body to cure those of the soul. Comfort yourself with the sovereign Physician both of the soul and body. Be satisfied with the condition in which God places you."

"We must *know* before we can *love*."

"Let all our employment be to know God; the more one knows Him, the more one desires to know Him. And as knowledge is commonly the measure of love, the deeper and more extensive our knowledge shall be, the greater will be our love; and if our love of God were great, we should love Him equally in pains and pleasures."

"We must make our heart a spiritual temple, wherein to adore Him incessantly."

Brother Lawrence (1611-1691), *The Practice of the Presence of God*

"If you live long enough, you'll see that every victory turns into a defeat."

Simone de Beauvoir

"Life is truly known only to those who suffer, lose, endure adversity, and stumble from defeat to defeat."

"The personal life deeply lived always expands into truths beyond itself."

"And the time came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom."

"We don't see things as they are; we see them as *we* are."

"Shame is the lie someone told you about yourself."

"People living deeply have no fear of death."

"Life is a process of becoming, a combination of states we have to go through. Where people fail is that they wish to elect a state and remain in it. This is a kind of death."

"I take pleasure in my transformations. I look quiet and consistent, but few know how many women there are in me."

"I believe one writes because one has to create a world in which one can live."

"Dreams are necessary to life."

"Creation which cannot express itself becomes madness."

"There is not one big cosmic meaning for all; there is only the meaning we each give to our life, an individual meaning, an individual plot, like an individual novel, a book for each person."

"We do not grow absolutely, chronologically. We grow sometimes in one dimension, and not in another; unevenly. We grow partially. We are relative. We are mature in one realm, childish in another. The past, present, and future mingle and pull us backward, forward, or fix us in the present. We are made up of layers, cells, constellations."

"Nature forms us to ourselves, not to others; to be, not to seem."

"When one is pretending, the entire body revolts." (...) "Whenever you do something that is not aligned with the yearning of your soul – you create suffering."

"I will not adjust myself to the world. I am adjusted to myself."

"The secret of a full life is to live and relate to others as if they might not be there tomorrow, as if you might not be there tomorrow."

"We are going to the moon; that is not very far. Man has so much farther to go within himself."

"There are very few human beings who receive the truth, complete and staggering, by instant illumination. Most of them acquire it fragment by fragment, on a small scale, by successive developments, cellularly, like a laborious mosaic."

"Our culture made a virtue of living only as extroverts. We discouraged the inner journey, the quest for a center. So we lost our center and have to find it again."

"When I am most deeply rooted, I feel the wildest desire to uproot myself."

"The real wonders of life lie in the depths. Exploring the depths for truths is the real wonder which the child and the artist know: magic and power lie in truth."

Anaïs Nin

"Ask of those who have attained God; all speak the same word. ... All the enlightened have left one message; ... it is only those in the midst of their journey who hold diverse opinions."

Dadu

"Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself."

"This is a subtle truth. Whatever you love, you are."

Rumi

"A man settles where he finds his peace. Not beauty, not money, not status, not anything else, but peace."

Unknown

"Das Ego sagt: 'Wenn alles an seinem Platz ist, werde ich Frieden finden.' Die Seele sagt: 'Finde Frieden, und alles wird seinen Platz finden.' "

Unknown

“The Ruler of the universe has ordered all things with a view to the excellence and preservation of the whole; and each part, as far as may be, does and suffers what is proper to it. And one of these portions of the universe is thine own, unhappy man, which, infinitesimal though it be, is ever striving towards the whole; and you do not seem to be aware that this and every other creation is in order so that the life of the whole may be blessed; and that you are created for the sake of the whole, and not the whole for the sake of you.”

“As for the sovereign part of the human soul, we should consider that God gave it to be the Divinity in each one, it being that which, inasmuch as we are a plant not of an earthly but a heavenly growth, raises us from earth to our brethren in heaven.

When one is always occupied with the cravings of desire and ambition which he is eagerly striving to satisfy, all his thoughts must be mortal, and, as far as it is possible to become such, he must be mortal every whit, because he has made great his mortal part. But he who has been earnest in the love of knowledge and true wisdom, and has exercised his intellect more than any other part, must have thoughts immortal and divine. If he attains Truth, in so far as human nature is capable of sharing in immortality, he must altogether be immortal. And since he is ever cherishing the divine power, and has duly honored the Divinity within, he will be supremely happy.”

“The true lover of knowledge is always striving after Being – that is his nature; he will not rest at those multitudinous particular phenomena whose existence is in appearance only, but will go on – the keen edge will not be blunted, nor the force of his passion abate until he have attained the knowledge of the true nature of all essence by a sympathetic and kindred power in the soul. And by that power, drawing near and becoming one with very Being, (...) he will know and truly live and increase. Then, and only then, will he cease from his travail.”

“The immortality of the soul is demonstrated by many proofs; but to see it as it really is – not as we now behold it, marred by communion with the body and other miseries – you must contemplate it with the eye of reason in its original purity; and then its beauty will be revealed. (...) When a person starts on the discovery of the Absolute by the light of the reason only, without the assistance of the senses, and never desists until by pure intelligence he arrives at the perception of the absolute Good, he at last finds himself at the end of the intellectual world.”

“Of that Heaven which is above the heavens, what earthly poet ever did or ever will sing worthily? It is such as I will describe; for I must dare to speak the truth, when Truth is my theme. There abides the very Being with which true knowledge is concerned; the colorless, formless, intangible Essence visible only to mind, the pilot of the soul. (...) Every soul which is capable of receiving the food proper to it rejoices at beholding Reality. (...) She beholds Knowledge absolute, not in the form of generation or of relation, which men call existence, but Knowledge absolute in Existence absolute.”

“To find the Father and Maker of this universe is most difficult, and to declare Him, after having found Him, is impossible.”

“A man must have knowledge of the Universal, formed by collecting into a unity by means of reason the many particulars of sense; this is the recollection of those things which our soul once saw while following God – when, regardless of that which we now call being, it raised its head up towards true Being. And therefore the mind of the philosopher alone has wings; and this is just, for he is always, as far as he is able, clinging in recollection to those things in which God abides, and beholding which, he is what God is. And he who employs aright these memories is ever being initiated into perfect mysteries, and he alone becomes truly perfect. But since he stands apart from human interests and is rapt in the Divine, the vulgar deem him mad and do not know he is inspired.”

“He who would be dear to God must, as far as is possible, become like Him. Wherefore the temperate man and the just is the friend of God, for he is like Him.

And this is the conclusion – that for the good man to (...) continually hold converse with God by means of prayers and every kind of service, is the noblest and the best of things, and the most conducive to a happy life.

This is that life above all others which man should live, (...) holding converse with the true Beauty, simple and divine. In that communion only beholding Beauty with the eye of the mind, he will be enabled to bring forth, not images of beauty, but Reality Itself; (...) and bringing forth and nourishing true virtue, to become the friend of God and be immortal, if mortal man may. ”

Socrates, as preserved by Plato

“Without work, all life goes rotten. But when work is soulless, life stifles and dies.”

Albert Camus

“There are two lives, the natural and the spiritual, and we must lose the one before we can participate in the other.”

William James

“Discipline divorced from wisdom is not true discipline, but merely the meaningless following of a custom, which is only a disguise for stupidity.”

Rabindranath Tagore

"For we are all divorced from life, we are all cripples, every one of us, more or less. We are so divorced from it that we feel at once a sort of loathing for real life, and so cannot bear to be reminded of it."

"We have all lost touch with life, we all limp, each to a greater or lesser degree."

"(...) man is so addicted to systems and to abstract conclusions that he is prepared deliberately to distort the truth, to close his eyes and ears, but justify his logic at all cost."

"Above all, don't lie to yourself. The man who lies to himself and listens to his own lie comes to a point that he cannot distinguish the truth within him, or around him, and so loses all respect for himself and for others. And having no respect, he ceases to live."

"You began with a lie, what began with a lie was bound to also end with a lie. That is a law of nature."

"In every man's memories, there are such things as he will reveal not to everyone, but perhaps only to friends. There are also such as he will reveal not even to friends, but only to himself, and that in secret. Then, finally, there are such as a man is afraid to reveal even to himself, and every decent man will have accumulated quite a few things of this sort."

"Pain and suffering are always inevitable for a large intelligence and a deep heart. The really great men must, I think, have great sadness on earth."

"Suffering is part and parcel of extensive intelligence and a feeling heart."

"I think man will never renounce real suffering, that is destruction and chaos. Why, suffering is the sole origin of consciousness."

"The law of self-destruction and the law of self-preservation are equally strong in mankind."

"Can a man of perception respect himself at all?"

"With such a hell in your heart and your head, how can you live? How can you love?"

"Lamentations comfort only by lacerating the heart still more. Such grief does not desire consolation. It feeds on the sense of its hopelessness. Lamentations spring only from the constant craving to reopen the wound."

"It is a law of nature that every decent man on earth is bound to be a coward and a slave. (...) Every decent man of our age must be a coward and a slave. That is his normal condition. Of that I am firmly persuaded. He is made and constructed to that very end. And not only at the present time owing to some casual

circumstance, but always, at all times, a decent man is bound to be a coward and a slave.”

“No man lives, can live, without having some object in view, and making efforts to attain that object. But when object there is none, and hope is entirely fled, anguish often turns a man into a monster.”

“Now answer me, sincerely, honestly, who lives past forty? I’ll tell you who does: fools and scoundrels.”

“It must be true that the whole second half of a man’s life is most often made up only of habits accumulated during the first half.”

“Talk nonsense, but talk your own nonsense, and I’ll kiss you for it. To go wrong in one’s own way is better than to go right in someone else’s.”

“To talk nonsense in one’s own way is almost better than to talk a truth that’s someone else’s.”

“You think I am attacking them for talking nonsense? Not a bit! I like them to talk nonsense. That’s man’s one privilege over all creation. Through error, you come to the truth.”

“With quietism like yours, one could fill a hundred years with happiness. Whether one showed you an execution or a little finger, you would extract an equally edifying thought from both of them, and would still be content. That’s the way to get on in life.”

“It requires to be a great man to resist the common sense.”

“One cannot prove anything here, but it is possible to be convinced.”

“I say, let the world go to hell, but I should always have my tea.”

“It takes something more than intelligence to act intelligently.”

“I love mankind, (...) but I find to my amazement that the more I love mankind as a whole, the less I love man in particular.”

“Love is a teacher, but one must know how to acquire it, for it is difficult to acquire, it is dearly bought, by long work over a long time, for one ought to love not for a chance moment, but for all time. Anyone, even a wicked man, can love by chance.”

“On our earth, we can only love with suffering and through suffering. We cannot love otherwise, and we know of no other sort of love.”

“Accept suffering and redeem yourself by it, that’s what you must do.”

"The mystery of human existence lies not in just staying alive, but in finding something to live for."

"The world says 'You have needs – satisfy them. You have as much right as the rich and the mighty. Don't hesitate to satisfy your needs; indeed, expand your needs and demand more.' This is the worldly doctrine of today. And they believe that this is freedom. The result for the rich is isolation and suicide, for the poor, envy and murder."

"By interpreting freedom as the propagation and immediate gratification of needs, people distort their own nature, for they engender in themselves a multitude of pointless and foolish desires, habits and incongruous stratagems. Their lives are motivated only by mutual envy, sensuality, and ostentation."

"We have reached a stage at which we have surrounded ourselves with more things, but have less joy."

"The harmonious man, it needs to be said, hardly exists at all; out of many tens, even hundreds or thousands, perhaps one or two at most are encountered, and even then in rather feeble versions."

"The vast mass of mankind is mere material, and only exists in order by some great effort, by some mysterious process, by means of some crossing of races and stocks, to bring into the world at last perhaps one man out of a thousand with a spark of independence."

"Already at the age of sixteen I wondered at them gloomily; I was amazed at the pettiness of their minds, the stupidity of their activities, games, and conversations. They were so lacking in understanding of the most essential things, so devoid of interest in the most important, most remarkable matters, that I involuntarily began to look upon them as my inferiors."

"You know, my boy, he said, it's impossible to love men such as they are. And yet we must. So try to do good to men by doing violence to your feelings, holding your nose, and shutting your eyes, especially shutting your eyes. Endure their villainy without anger, as much as possible; try to remember that you're a man too. For, if you're even a little above average intelligence, you'll have the propensity to judge people severely. Men are vile by nature and they'd rather love out of fear. Don't give in to such love; despise it always."

"Now, I am living out my life in my corner, taunting myself with the spiteful and useless consolation that an intelligent man cannot become anything seriously, and it is only the fool who becomes anything."

"Allow me to give you some advice from the heart: don't give up art, and even give yourself over to it even more than so far. (...) Living in solitude and embittering your soul with recollections, you can make your life very gloomy. There is a single refuge, a single medicine: art and creative work."

"I invented adventures for myself and made up a life, so as at least to live in some way."

"Yes, man is broad, too broad, indeed. I'd have him narrower."

"Man is a mystery. It needs to be unravelled, and if you spend your whole life unravelling it, don't say that you've wasted time. I am studying that mystery because I want to be a human being."

"Everything will come in due course, if you have the gumption to wait for it."

"To achieve perfection, you should not understand much at first! If we conceive too fast, we may not conceive properly." – "In order to achieve perfection, we must first of all fail to understand a great many things! And if we understand too quickly, we may not understand very well."

"He did not know that the new life would not be given to him for nothing, that he would have to pay dearly for it, that it would cost him great striving, great suffering. But that is the beginning of a new story – the story of gradual renewal of a man, the story of his gradual regeneration, of his passing from one world into another, of his initiation into a new unknown life."

"It suddenly seemed to me that I was lonely, that everyone was forsaking me and going away from me."

"Do you believe in a future everlasting life? – No, not in a future everlasting life, but in an everlasting life here. There are moments, you reach moments, and time comes to a sudden stop, and it will become eternal."

"Everyone is really responsible to all men for all men and for everything."

"Do not say, 'Sin is mighty, wickedness is mighty, evil environment is mighty, and we are lonely and helpless, and evil environment is wearing us away and hindering our good work from being done.' Fly from that dejection, children! There is only one means of salvation, then take yourself and make yourself responsible for all men's sins, that is the truth, you know, friends, for as soon as you sincerely make yourself responsible for everything and for all men, you will see at once that it is really so, and that you are to blame for every one and for all things. But throwing your own indolence and impotence on others, you will end by sharing the pride of Satan and murmuring against God."

"For you must know, my dear ones, that each of us is undoubtedly guilty on behalf of all and for all on earth, not only because of the common guilt of the world, but personally, each one of us, for all people and for each person on this planet. This knowledge is the crown of the monk's path, and of every man's path on earth. For monks are not a different sort of men, but only such as all men on earth ought also to be. Only then will our hearts be moved to a love that is infinite, universal, and that knows no satiety. Then each of us will be able to gain the whole world by love and wash away the world's sins with his tears."

"Love one another, (...) love God's people. (...) Each of you keep watch over your heart and confess your sins to yourself unceasingly. Be not afraid of your sins, even when perceiving them, if only there be penitence, but make no conditions with God. Again, I say, be not proud. Be proud neither to the little nor to the great."

"Never for one minute have I taken you for reality... You are a lie, you are my illness, you are a phantom... You are my hallucination. You are the incarnation of myself... of my thoughts and feelings, but only the nastiest and stupidest of them."

"He was one of ourselves, a man of our blood and our bone, but one who has suffered and has seen so much more deeply than we have his insight impresses us as wisdom... that wisdom of the heart which we seek that we may learn from it how to live. All his other gifts came to him from nature; this he won for himself, and through it, he became great."

"If you want to overcome the whole world, overcome yourself."

"(...) man holds the remedy in his own hands, and lets everything go its own way, simply through cowardice."

"Yes, I dreamed a dream. (...) But does it matter whether it was a dream or reality, if the dream made known to me the truth?"

"I almost do not exist now and I know it; God knows what lives in me in place of me."

"Every one who wants the supreme freedom must dare to kill himself. He who dares to kill himself has found out the secret of the deception. There is no freedom beyond; that is all, and there is nothing beyond. He who dares to kill himself is God."

"Believe to the end, even if all men went astray and you were left the only one faithful; bring your offering even then and praise God in your loneliness."

"Everything passes, only truth remains."

"Reality is a thing of infinite diversity, and defies the most ingenious deductions and definitions of abstract thought, nay, abhors the clear and precise classifications in which we so delight. Reality tends to infinite subdivision of things, and truth is a matter of infinite shadings and differentiations."

"When you are older, you'll understand for yourself the influence of age on convictions."

"For, after all, you do grow up, you do outgrow your ideals, which turn to dust and ashes, which are shattered into fragments; and if you have no other life, you just have to build one up out of these fragments."

"Silence is always beautiful, and a silent person is always more beautiful than one who talks."

"(...) everybody needs a place somewhere, a place he can go. There comes a time, you see, inevitably there comes a time you have to have a somewhere you can go."

"(...) the direct, lawful, immediate fruit of consciousness is inertia – that is, a conscious sitting with folded arms. (...) I repeat, emphatically repeat: ingenious people and active figures are all active simply because they are dull and narrow-minded. How to explain it? Here's how: as a consequence of their narrow-mindedness, they take the most immediate and secondary causes for the primary ones, and thus become convinced more quickly and easily than others that they have found an indisputable basis for their doings, and so they feel at ease; and that, after all, is the main thing. For in order to begin to act, one must first be completely at ease, so that no more doubts remain. Well, and how am I, for example, to set myself at ease? Where are the primary causes on which I can rest; where are my bases? Where am I going to get them? I exercise thinking, and, consequently, for me every primary cause immediately drags with it yet another, still more primary one, and so on ad infinitum. Such is precisely the essence of all consciousness and thought."

"It is not as a child that I believe and confess Jesus Christ. My hosanna is born of a furnace of doubt."

"And who knows (there is no saying with certainty), perhaps the only goal on earth to which mankind is striving lies in this incessant process of attaining, in other words, in life itself, and not in the thing to be attained, which must always be expressed as a formula, as positive as twice two makes four, and such positiveness is not life, gentlemen, but is the beginning of death. Anyway, man has always been afraid of this mathematical certainty, and I am afraid of it now. Granted that man does nothing but seek that mathematical certainty, he traverses oceans, sacrifices his life in the quest, but to succeed, really to find it, dreads, I assure you."

"Originality and a feeling of one's dignity are achieved only through work and struggle."

"Obedience, fasting and prayer are laughed at, yet only through them lies the way to real freedom. I cut off my superfluous and unnecessary desires, I subdue my proud and wanton will and chastise it with obedience, and with God's help, I attain freedom of spirit, and with it spiritual joy."

"Full freedom will come only when it makes no difference whether to live or not to live. That's the goal for everyone."

"Cheap heroism is always easy, and even to sacrifice life is easy too; because it is only a case of hot blood and an overflow of energy, and there is such a longing for what is beautiful! No, take the deed of heroism that is laborious, obscure, without noise or flourish, slandered, in which there is a great deal of sacrifice and not one grain of glory – in which you, a splendid man, are made to look like a scoundrel before every one, though you might be the most honest man in the world – you try that sort of heroism and you'll soon give it up! While I – have been bearing the burden of that all my life."

"Much on earth is concealed from us, but in place of it, we have been granted a secret, mysterious sense of our living bond with the other world, with the higher heavenly world, and the roots of our thoughts and feelings are not here, but in other worlds. That is why philosophers say it is impossible on earth to conceive the essence of things. God took seeds from other worlds and sowed them on this earth, and raised up his garden; and everything that could sprout sprouted, but it lives and grows only through its sense of being in touch with other mysterious worlds; if this sense is weakened or destroyed in you, that which has grown up on you dies. Then you become indifferent to life, and even come to hate it."

"I suddenly felt that it was all the same to me whether the world existed or whether there had never been anything at all; I began to feel with all my being that there was nothing existing. At first, I fancied that many things had existed in the past; but afterwards, I guessed that there never had been anything in the past either, but that it had only seemed so for some reason. Little by little, I guessed that there would be nothing in the future either. (...) I had almost given up thinking by that time; nothing mattered to me. If at least I had solved my problems! Oh, I had not settled one of them, and how many there were! But I gave up caring about anything, and all the problems disappeared."

"Reflect on the 'I' which can grasp all this. If the 'I' can grasp the idea of the universe and its laws, then that 'I' stands above all other things, stands aside from all other things, judges them, fathoms them. In that case, the 'I' is not only liberated from earthly axioms, the earthly laws, but has its own law, which transcends the earthly. Now, whence comes that law? Certainly not from earth, where all reaches its issue, and vanishes beyond call. Is that no indication of immortality?"

"His mind is in bondage. He is haunted by a great, unsolved doubt. He is one of those who don't want millions, but an answer to their questions."

"Every minute, every instant of life ought to be a blessing to man... they ought to be, they certainly ought to be! It's the duty of man to make it so; that's the law of his nature, which always exists, even if hidden."

"Man is a creature that can get accustomed to anything, and I think that is the best definition of him."

"I could get used to anything – that is, not really get used, but somehow voluntarily consent to endure it."

“For the mystery of human being does not solely rest in the desire to live, but in the problem – for what should one live at all? Without a clear perception of his reasons for living, man will never consent to live, and will rather destroy himself than tarry on earth, though he be surrounded by bread.”

“The most degrading cross has always produced the greatest glory and force, as long as the humility of the martyrdom is sincere. But do you have that humility?”

“Everyone is striving to unite particulars and find at least some general sense in the general senselessness.”

“I am a bug, and I recognize in all humility that I cannot understand why the world is arranged as it is.”

“Man is pre-eminently a creative animal, predestined to strive consciously for an object and to engage in engineering – that is, incessantly and eternally to make new roads, wherever they may lead.”

“Active love is labor and perseverance, and for some people, perhaps, a whole science. But I predict that even in that very moment when you see with horror that despite all your efforts, you not only have not come nearer your goal, but seem to have gotten further away from it, at that very moment – I predict this to you – you will suddenly reach your goal and will clearly behold over you the wonder-working power of the Lord, who all the while has been loving you, and all the while has been mysteriously guiding you.”

“Do not be afraid of anything, never be afraid, and do not grieve. Just let repentance not slacken in you, and God will forgive everything. There is not and cannot be in the whole world such a sin that the Lord will not forgive one who truly repents of it. A man even cannot commit so great a sin as would exhaust God’s boundless love. How could there be a sin that exceeds God’s love? Only take care that you repent without ceasing, and chase away fear altogether. (...) Go, then, and do not be afraid. Do not be upset with people; do not take offense at their wrongs. Forgive the dead man in your heart for all the harm he did you; be reconciled with him truly. If you are repentant, it means that you love. And if you love, you already belong to God.”

“To be a human being among people and to remain one forever, no matter in what circumstances, not to grow despondent and not to lose heart – that’s what life is all about, that’s its task.”

“The best way to keep a prisoner from escaping is to make sure he never knows he’s in prison.”

“After all, bluff and real emotion exist so easily side by side.”

“Marriage is the moral death of every proud soul, of all independence.”

“For a woman, all resurrection, all salvation, from whatever perdition, lies in love; in fact, it is her only way to it.”

“Men reject their prophets and slay them, but they love their martyrs and honor those they have slain.”

“Roman Catholicism was not Christianity; you asserted that Rome proclaimed Christ subject to the third temptation of the devil. Announcing to all the world that Christ without an earthly kingdom cannot hold his ground upon earth, Catholicism by so doing proclaimed Antichrist and ruined the whole Western world.”

“(…) the science of this world, which has become a great power, has, especially in the last century, analyzed everything divine handed down to us in the holy books. After this cruel analysis, the learned of this world have nothing left of all that was sacred of old. But they have only analyzed the parts and overlooked the whole, and indeed their blindness is marvelous. Yet the whole still stands steadfast before their eyes, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Has it not lasted nineteen centuries, is it not still a living, a moving power in the individual soul and in the masses of people? It is still as strong and living even in the souls of atheists, who have destroyed everything! For even those who have renounced Christianity and attack it, in their innermost being still follow the Christian ideal, for hitherto neither their subtlety nor the ardour of their hearts has been able to create a higher ideal of man and of value than the ideal given by Christ of old. When it has been attempted, the result has been only grotesque.”

“Man was created a rebel; and how can rebels be happy?”

“Nothing has ever been more insupportable for a man and a human society than freedom.”

“In the end, they will lay their freedom at our feet and say to us, ‘Make us your slaves, but feed us’.”

“Man is tormented by no greater anxiety than to find someone quickly to whom he can hand over that great gift of freedom with which the ill-fated creature is born.”

“Anyone who can appease a man’s conscience can take his freedom away from him.”

“That day must come when men will understand that freedom and daily bread enough to satisfy all are unthinkable and can never be had together, as men will never be able to fairly divide the two among themselves. And they will also learn that they can never be free, for they are weak, vicious, miserable nonentities born wicked and rebellious.”

“There exists no greater or more painful anxiety for a man who has freed himself from all religious bias, than how he shall soonest find a new object or idea to worship. But man seeks to bow before that only which is recognized by the greater majority, if not by all his fellow-men, as having a right to be worshipped; whose rights are so unquestionable that men agree unanimously to bow down to it. For the chief concern of these miserable creatures is not to find and worship the idol of their own choice, but to discover that which all others will believe in, and consent to bow down to in a mass.”

“It is that instinctive need of having a worship in common that is the chief suffering of every man, the chief concern of mankind from the beginning of times. It is for that universality of religious worship that people destroyed each other by sword. Creating gods unto themselves, they forthwith began appealing to each other: ‘Abandon your deities, come and bow down to ours, or death to ye and your idols!’ And so will they do till the end of this world; they will do so even then, when all the gods themselves disappeared, for then men will prostrate themselves before and worship some idea.”

“Everything was given over by Thee to the Pope, and everything now rests with him alone; Thou hast no business to return and thus hinder us in our work. In this sense the Jesuits not only talk but write likewise.”

“(…) Thou didst think too highly of men (...), for they are slaves, of course, though rebellious by nature. Look round and judge; fifteen centuries have passed, look upon them. Whom hast Thou raised up to Thyself? I swear, man is weaker and baser by nature than Thou hast believed him! Can he, can he do what Thou didst? By showing him so much respect, Thou didst, as it were, cease to feel for him, for Thou didst ask far too much from him – Thou who hast loved him more than Thyself! Respecting him less, Thou wouldst have asked less of him. That would have been more like love, for his burden would have been lighter. He is weak and vile. What though he is everywhere now rebelling against our power, and proud of his rebellion? It is the pride of a child and a schoolboy. They are little children rioting and barring out the teacher at school. But their childish delight will end; it will cost them dear. They will cast down temples and drench the earth with blood. But they will see at last, the foolish children, that, though they are rebels, they are impotent rebels, unable to keep up their own rebellion.”

“(…) unrest, confusion and unhappiness – that is the present lot of man after Thou didst bear so much for their freedom!”

“Canst Thou have simply come to the elect and for the elect? But if so, it is a mystery and we cannot understand it. And if it is a mystery, we too have a right to preach a mystery, and to teach them that it’s not the free judgment of their hearts, not love that matters, but a mystery which they must follow blindly, even against their conscience. So we have done. We have corrected Thy work and have founded it upon miracle, mystery and authority. And men rejoiced that they were again led like sheep, and that the terrible gift that had brought them such suffering was, at last, lifted from their hearts.”

"We are not working with Thee, but with him – that is our mystery. It's long – eight centuries – since we have been on his side and not on Thine. Just eight centuries ago, we took from him what Thou didst reject with scorn, that last gift he offered Thee, showing Thee all the kingdoms of the earth. We took from him Rome and the sword of Caesar, and proclaimed ourselves sole rulers of the earth, though hitherto we have not been able to complete our work. But whose fault is that? Oh, the work is only beginning, but it has begun. It has long to await completion and the earth has yet much to suffer, but we shall triumph and shall be Caesars, and then we shall plan the universal happiness of man."

"(...) the craving for universal unity is the third and last anguish of men. Mankind as a whole has always striven to organize a universal state. There have been many great nations with great histories, but the more highly they were developed, the more unhappy they were, for they felt more acutely than other people the craving for world-wide union. The great conquerors, Timours and Ghenghis-Khans, whirled like hurricanes over the face of the earth striving to subdue people, and they too were but the unconscious expression of the same craving for universal unity. Hadst Thou taken the world and Caesar's purple, Thou wouldst have founded the universal state and have given universal peace. For who can rule men if not he who holds their conscience and their bread in his hands?"

"Oh, we shall convince them that only in surrendering their freedom to us and submitting to us can they be free. Well, shall we be right or shall we be lying? They will see for themselves that we are right, for they will remember to what horrors of slavery and confusion your freedom let them. Freedom, science, and independence of spirit will lead them into such a labyrinth and confront them with such miracles and such insoluble mysteries that some of them, intractable and savage, will destroy themselves, while others, intractable but less strong, will destroy one another; and those who remain, feeble and unhappy, will crawl up to our feet and will cry out to us, 'Yes, you were right, you alone held his secret, and we are returning to you: save us from ourselves'."

"Who scattered the flock and sent it astray on unknown paths? But the flock will come together again and will submit once more, and then it will be once for all. Then we shall give them the quiet humble happiness of weak creatures such as they are by nature. Oh, we shall persuade them at last not to be proud, for Thou didst lift them up and thereby taught them to be proud. We shall show them that they are weak, that they are only pitiful children, but that childlike happiness is the sweetest of all. They will become timid and will look to us and huddle close to us in fear, as chicks to the hen. They will marvel at us and will be awe-stricken before us, and will be proud at us being so powerful and clever, that we have been able to subdue such a turbulent flock of thousands of millions. They will tremble impotently before our wrath, their minds will grow fearful, they will be quick to shed tears like women and children, but they will be just as ready at a sign from us to laughter and rejoicing, to happy mirth and childish song. Yes, we shall set them to work, but in leisure hours we shall make their life like a child's game, with children's songs and innocent dance. Oh, we shall allow them even sin, they are weak and helpless, and they will love us like children because we

allow them to sin. We shall tell them that every sin will be expiated, if it is done with our permission, that we allow them to sin because we love them, and the punishment for those sins we take upon ourselves. And we shall take it upon ourselves, and they will adore us as their saviors who have taken on themselves their sins before God. And they will have no secrets from us. We shall allow or forbid them to live with their wives and mistresses, to have or not to have children – according to whether they have been obedient or disobedient – and they will submit to us gladly and cheerfully. The most painful secrets of their conscience, all, all they will bring to us, and we shall have an answer for all. And they will be glad to believe our answer, for it will save them from the great anxiety and terrible agony they endure at present in making a free decision for themselves. (...) we shall keep the secret, and for their happiness, we shall allure them with the reward of heaven and eternity.”

“(...) he sees that he must (...) accept lying and deception, and lead men consciously to death and destruction, and yet deceive them all the way so that they may not notice where they are being led, that the poor blind creatures may at least on the way think themselves happy.”

“This is what happens: the sensitive and honest man opens his heart, and the business man listens and takes it all in, so that he can swallow up the honest fellow.”

“People won’t change, nobody can reform them, and it’s not worth the effort! Yes, that’s right! It’s the law of their being... (...) whoever is strong and self-confident in mind and spirit has power over them! Whoever is bold and dares has right on his side. Whoever can spit on the most people becomes their legislator, and whoever dares the most has the most right! So it has been in the past, and so it will always be!”

“Dedicating my energies to the study of the social organisation which is in the future to replace the present condition of things, I’ve come to the conviction that all makers of social systems from ancient times up to the present year, 187-, have been dreamers, tellers of fairy-tales, fools who contradicted themselves, who understood nothing of natural science and the strange animal called man. Plato, Rousseau, Fourier, columns of aluminium, are only fit for sparrows and not for human society. But, now that we are at last preparing to act, a new form of social organisation is essential. In order to avoid further uncertainty, I propose my own system of world-organisation. (...) I am perplexed by my own data, and my conclusion is a direct contradiction of the original idea with which I start. Starting from unlimited freedom, I arrive at unlimited despotism. I will add, however, that there can be no solution of the social problem but mine. (...) if you reject my solution, you’ll find no other, none whatever!”

“Mr. Shigalov (...) suggests as a final solution of the question the division of mankind into two unequal parts. One-tenth enjoys absolute liberty and unbounded power over the other nine-tenths. The others have to give up all individuality and become, so to speak, a herd, and through boundless submission, will by a series of regenerations attain primaeval innocence,

something like the Garden of Eden. They'll have to work, however. The measures proposed by the author for depriving nine-tenths of mankind of their freedom and transforming them into a herd through education of whole generations are very remarkable, founded on the facts of nature and highly logical. (...) What I propose is not contemptible; it's paradise, an earthly paradise, and there can be no other on earth."

"He's got it all down nicely in his notebook. (...) He's got spying. He's got each member of society watching the others and obliged to inform. Each belongs to all, and all to each. They're all slaves and equal in their slavery. Slander and murder in extreme cases, but above all – equality. The first thing is to lower the level of education, science and accomplishment. A high level of science and accomplishment is accessible only to people of high ability, and there's no need for high ability! People of high ability have always seized power and been despots. People of high ability can't help but be despots and have always corrupted more than they have brought benefit; they are sent into exile or executed. (...) Slaves must be equal: there has never yet been either freedom or equality without despotism, but within a herd there must be equality, and this is Shigalyovism!"

"Only the necessary is necessary – henceforth that is the motto of the whole globe. But there is also a need of convulsion; this will be taken care of by us, the rulers. Slaves must have rulers. Complete obedience, complete impersonality, but once every thirty years, Shigalov gets a convulsion going, and they all suddenly start devouring each other, up to a certain point, simply so as not to be bored."

Fyodor Dostoevsky

"The true mystic, realizing God, has no need of any scriptures, for he has touched the source whence all scriptures flow."

Annie Besant

"If you would be a real seeker after truth, it is necessary that at least once in your life, you doubt, as far as possible, all things."

René Descartes

"Where there is choice, there is confusion. It's only the confused one that chooses. A clear mind that sees things clearly has no choice."

Jiddu Krishnamurti

"As a professor in two fields, neurology and psychiatry, I am fully aware of the extent to which man is subject to biological, psychological and sociological conditions. But in addition to being a professor in two fields, I am a survivor of four camps – concentration camps, that is – and as such, I also bear witness to the unexpected extent to which man is capable of defying and braving even the worst conditions conceivable."

"We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing, the last of the human freedoms – to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."

"Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom."

"Man does not simply exist, but always decides what his existence will be, what he will become the next moment. By the same token, every human being has the freedom to change at any instant."

"(...) man is ultimately self-determining. What he becomes, within the limits of endowment and environment, he has made out of himself. (...) Man has many potentialities within himself; which one is actualized depends on decisions, not on conditions."

"In some ways, suffering ceases to be suffering at the moment it finds a meaning, such as the meaning of a sacrifice."

"Life is never made unbearable by circumstances, but only by lack of meaning and purpose."

"Happiness cannot be pursued; it must ensue."

"What is demanded of man is not, as some existential philosophers teach, to endure the meaninglessness of life, but rather to bear his incapacity to grasp its unconditional meaningfulness in rational terms. Logos is deeper than logic."

"Everyone has his own specific vocation or mission in life; everyone must carry out a concrete assignment that demands fulfillment. Therein he cannot be replaced, nor can his life be repeated. Thus everyone's task is unique, as is his specific opportunity to implement it."

"(...) mental health is based on a certain degree of tension, the tension between what one has already achieved and what one still ought to accomplish, or the gap between what one is and what one should become. Such tension is inherent in the human being, and therefore indispensable to mental well-being. (...) What man actually needs is not a tensionless state, but rather the striving and struggling for a worthwhile goal, a freely chosen task. What he needs is not the

discharge of tension at any cost, but the call of a potential meaning waiting to be fulfilled by him.”

“Life is not primarily a quest for pleasure, as Freud believed, or a quest for power, as Alfred Adler taught, but a quest for meaning.”

“Self-actualization is possible only as a side-effect of self-transcendence.”

Viktor Frankl

“Everything had changed suddenly – the tone, the moral climate; you didn’t know what to think, whom to listen to. As if all your life you had been led by the hand like a small child, and suddenly you were on your own, you had to learn to walk by yourself. There was no one around, neither family nor people whose judgment you respected. At such a time, you felt the need of committing yourself to something absolute – life or truth or beauty – of being ruled by it in place of the man-made rules that had been discarded. You needed to surrender to some such ultimate purpose more fully, more unreservedly than you had ever done in the old familiar, peaceful days, in the old life that was now abolished and gone for good.”

“The great majority of us are required to live a constant, systematic duplicity. Your health is bound to be affected by it if, day after day, you say the opposite of what you feel, you grovel before what you dislike, and rejoice at what brings you nothing but misfortune. Our nervous system isn’t just a fiction; it’s part of our physical body, and our soul exists in space and is inside us, like teeth in our mouth. It can’t be forever violated with impunity.”

“I don’t like people who have never fallen or stumbled. Their virtue is lifeless and of little value. Life hasn’t revealed its beauty to them.”

“Only the solitary seek the truth, and they break with all those who don’t love it sufficiently.”

“Salvation lies not in faithfulness to forms, but in the liberation from them.”

“You said that facts are meaningless, unless meanings are put into them. Well, Christianity, the mystery of the individual, is precisely what must be put into the facts to make them meaningful.”

“I am weary of this notion of faithfulness to a point of view at all cost. Life around us is ever changing, and I believe that one should try to change one’s slant accordingly – at least once every ten years. The great heroic devotion to one point of view is very alien to me – it’s a lack of humility. Mayakovsky killed himself because his pride would not be reconciled with something new happening within himself – or around him.”

Boris Pasternak

"It is an illusion that youth is happy, an illusion of those who have lost it; but the young know they are wretched for they are full of the truthless ideals which have been instilled in them, and each time they come in contact with the real, they are bruised and wounded. It looks as if they were victims of a conspiracy; for the books they read, ideal by the necessity of selection, and the conversation of their elders, who look back upon the past through a rosy haze of forgetfulness, prepare them for an unreal life. They must discover for themselves that all they have read and all they have been told are lies, lies, lies; and each discovery is another nail driven into the body on the cross."

"One cannot find peace in work or in pleasure, in the world or in a convent, but only in one's soul."

William Somerset Maugham

"Great men are like eagles, and build their nest on some lofty solitude."

Arthur Schopenhauer

"It is hard to fight against impulsive desire. Whatever it wants, it will buy at the cost of the soul."

Heraclitus

"For a man, to conquer himself is the first and noblest of all victories."

Plato

"No one is free who has not obtained the empire of himself."

Pythagoras

"Find the thing you want to do most intensely, make sure that's it, and do it with all your might. If you live, well and good. If you die, well and good. Your purpose is done."

H. G. Wells

"You must live in the present, launch yourself on every wave, find your eternity in each moment. Fools stand on their island of opportunities and look toward another land. There is no other land; there is no other life but this."

Henry David Thoreau

“Fortunately, some are born with spiritual immune systems that sooner or later give rejection to the illusory worldview grafted upon them from birth through social conditioning. They begin sensing that something is amiss, and start looking for answers. Inner knowledge and anomalous outer experiences show them a side of reality others are oblivious to, and so begins their journey of awakening. Each step of the journey is made by following the heart instead of following the crowd, and by choosing knowledge over the veils of ignorance.”

Henri Bergson

“Every man is a creature of the age in which he lives, and few are able to raise themselves above the ideas of time.”

Voltaire

“How could you rise anew if you have not first become ashes.”

Friedrich Nietzsche

“Freethinkers are those who are willing to use their minds without prejudice and without fearing to understand things that clash with their own customs, privileges, or beliefs. This state of mind is not common, but it is essential for right thinking.”

Leo Tolstoy

“Any man who is attached to the senses and things of this world (...) is one who lives in ignorance and is being consumed by the snakes that represent his own passions.”

Black Elk

“Truth is not what you want it to be; truth is what it is, and you must bend to its power, or live a lie.”

Miyamoto Musashi

“Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar.”

William Wordsworth

“The purpose of *Vedic Astrology* is to promote Self-realization. It encourages awareness of one’s essence of being as superior to the transient phenomena with which most people identify, such as circumstances, personality and the body. It teaches, *Here are the trends of your life, the experiences you sustain through behaving in the same ways repeatedly. If you keep living in the same way, here is an estimate of how your life will unfold. Now that you know the patterns, you can change them, because the patterns are not you.* (...) The ultimate goal of *Vedic Astrology* is to reveal the manifest nature of reality, as it is, beyond hopes, dreams, or delusions.”

“*Vedic Astrology* shares its roots with *Yoga* and *Ayurveda*. All three are sister sciences with one ultimate aim: to provide the proper structure in the physical world to allow the clarity of Self-realization to flow freely into material creation. *Yoga* provides physical and mental practices to tame the mind and the restlessness of the body. *Ayurvedic lifestyle regimens* harmonize the individualized mind/body constitution for optimal physical functioning. *Vedic Astrology* reveals the map and timing of habits and tendencies that may manifest in our life experiences. All for the purpose of elevating our awareness above the pull of the unconscious influences that can keep us bound to sorrow, grief and repeated needless suffering.”

Ryan Kurczak, Richard Fish

“If something burns your soul with purpose and desire, it’s your duty to be reduced to ashes by it. Any other form of existence will be yet another dull book in the library of life.”

Charles Bukowski

“Evil is whatever distracts.”

“Youth is happy because it has the capacity to see beauty. Anyone who keeps the ability to see beauty never grows old.”

Franz Kafka

“We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience.”

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

“Beloved Pan, and all ye diviner Ones about this place, grant that I may be good in the inner nature, and that what I have of external things may be accordant with those within. May I deem the wise man truly rich, and let me have only such an amount of material wealth as a provident man may possess and wisely use.”

The Prayer of Socrates

“You ever read Meister Eckhart? (...) Eckhart saw hell, too. You know what he said? He said, the only thing that burns in hell is the part of you that won’t let go of your life – your memories, your attachments. They burn them all away. But they’re not punishing you, he said. They’re freeing your soul. (...) So, the way he sees it, if you’re frightened of dying and you’re holding on, you’ll see the devils tearing your life away. But if you’ve made your peace, then the devils are really angels freeing you from the earth. It’s just a matter of how you look at it, that’s all. So don’t worry, okay?”

Jacob’s Ladder



THE NEMEAN LION



THE LERNAEAN HYDRA



THE CERYNEIAN HIND



THE ERYMANTHIAN BOAR



THE AUGEAN STABLES



THE STYMPHALIAN BIRDS



THE CRETAN BULL



THE HORSES OF DIOMEDES



HIPPOLYTE'S BELT



THE CATTLE OF GERION



THE APPLES OF THE HESPERIDES



CERBERUS

“The Twelve Labours of Hercules and the Twelve Signs of the Zodiac. – We shall trace the story of Hercules as he passed through the twelve signs of the zodiac. In each sign, he expressed its characteristics, and in each sign, he achieved some fresh knowledge of himself, and through that knowledge demonstrated the power of the sign and acquired the gifts which the sign conferred. In each of the signs, we shall find him surmounting his natural tendencies, controlling and governing his destiny, and demonstrating the fact that the stars incline, but do not control.”

“The progress of Hercules from the mental plane, through the emotional or desire plane and out into physical manifestation, and then his journey through the twelve signs, and by means of the twelve labours, to the point where he becomes an inspired Initiate, can be outlined for us briefly in the following statement:

1. In *Aries* (March 21 – April 20, the Ram) through the capture of the Man-Eating Mares, we see him make his start, react to thought impulse, and learn something of mind control. As the intelligent disciple, he starts out upon his career, beginning with an undefined spiritual urge to righteousness, and ending as the world saviour.

2. In *Taurus* (April 21 – May 20, the Bull), he has to learn the nature of desire, to transmute it into aspiration, to dominate sex, and use it rightly, and thus capture the Cretan Bull. This strong urge, and the potency of attraction, is that, as we shall see, which produces the great illusion, but which can, eventually, become the cause of illumination.

3. Passing on into the sign of *Gemini* (May 21 – June 20, the Twins), the progress of the disciple, hitherto subjective and characterized by thought and desire, works out into expression on the physical plane. In this sign, he arrives at knowledge of himself as a personality and gathers the golden apples of knowledge, subordinating to his enterprise the three aspects of the personal lower self, the physical body, the desire feeling nature, and the mind.

4. In *Cancer* (June 21 – July 21, the Crab), the higher faculty of the intuition is brought into play, and this is symbolized for us in the capture of the elusive Doe, or Hind, sensitive and difficult to find. In his previous cycles of life experience, he has transmuted instinct into intellect, but now, as the disciple, he must transmute intellect into intuition. The higher correspondences of all the lower powers have to be developed and utilized.

5. Thus equipped, in *Leo* (July 22 – August 21, the Lion), he undertakes the best known of his labours, the killing of the Nemean Lion. He demonstrates in this test the power to do two things and proves to his watching master, Eurystheus, that his refocused and coordinated personality is characterized by that determined courage which is the gift of people born in this sign, and he testifies through this labour also that the lower can be subordinated to the higher. Through the service rendered and the sanity of his procedure, he gives a guarantee of the strength of his purpose.

We might regard these five labours in Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer and Leo, as covering the entire period of the *Path of Probation*, and the killing of the Nemean Lion is the climax of that part of the struggle. Now he is ready to tread the *Path of Discipleship*, in which the indwelling Christ is gradually revealed, matter is steadily subordinated to the uses of the soul, and the form aspect comes to be regarded simply as the mother of the Christ Child. This progressive knowledge begins in Virgo, the sixth sign, the sign of the manger, and is consummated in Capricorn, the tenth sign, the birth sign of all the sun gods. On the Path of Discipleship, he has, secondly, to demonstrate that he has overcome illusion, that the magical glamour that imposes upon spirit no longer deludes. This is dramatically shown in the labour performed in Scorpio, the killing of the Nine-Headed Hydra. After Capricorn, he becomes a server of humanity, consecrated to the work of the Hierarchy, and this spiritual dedication to service finds its expression in the two last signs of the zodiacal round, those of Aquarius and Pisces.

6. In *Virgo* (August 22 – September 21, the Virgin), therefore, the first of the disciple signs, he performs his sixth labour, and seizes the girdle of Hippolyte, the Queen of the Amazons. It is interesting to note that the first labour on the probationary path started with a partial failure, in Aries, and the first labour on the Path of Discipleship in Virgo is also ‘done, but badly done’. The disciple must never be off his guard, for there is always the danger of error and of mistake. His very virtues can become his problem, and we are told that it is possible even for a high initiate son of God to drop back from the Path of Attainment. His failure is, however, only temporary. Fresh opportunities occur. The consequence of his mistake has been delay, but the day of restoration and of renewal inevitably recurs. In Virgo, we have depicted the preparation for the first initiation, the birth of the Christ, called in Christianity the birth of the Christ in the heart. This is a physical plane happening as well as a transcendental one, as we find when we study the signs of Virgo and of Capricorn.

7. In *Libra* (September 22 – October 21, the Balance), Hercules captures the Boar and, through the performance of this labour, demonstrates his fitness to take the second initiation, which concerns the emotional body. He balances the pairs of opposites and demonstrates it in an amusing and symbolic manner. He proves that poise and equilibrium are now achieved characteristics and that he is fit to undertake the tremendous task provided for him in the next sign.

8. In *Scorpio* (October 23 – November 22, the Scorpion), he enters upon his supreme test, which is also the supreme test for humanity, and which, if we study the times and seasons, appears that to which humanity is subjected at the present time. The problem before Hercules was his emancipation from illusion and the freeing of perception from the mists and miasmas, the glamour and the appearances, behind which Reality veils itself. In this sign, he passes successfully through his greatest trial and henceforth his problem changes. He has controlled and demonstrated his capacity to overcome desire; he is poised and balanced in his point of view; now, because he is no longer taken in by that which appears and because he can walk one-pointedly in the Light, he becomes a world worker.

9. This one-pointedness is demonstrated for us in *Sagittarius* (November 23 – December 22, the Archer), where we have the consummation of the task begun in Aries, which was the right use and control of thought. In Aries, he captured the Man-Eating Mares and bent them to his use. Now he slays the Man-Eating Birds of Stymphalus and puts an end to all tendencies to use thought destructively.

10. In Capricorn (December 23 – January 20, the Goat), he becomes an initiate and appears before the world as a saviour, a liberated son of God, able to work in Hell, on Earth, or in Heaven. He carries Cerberus up from Hades, and through the symbolism of the three-headed dog portrays the elevation of the personality, the triple matter aspect, into Heaven. (The three heads symbolize love of sensation, desire for happiness in the world of pleasure, and good intentions not carried out. The tail made of serpents typifies all illusions that impede the progress of spiritual life.) Thus he demonstrates that he has undergone the necessary development and experienced the strengthening tests which will enable him successfully to pass through the experience of the third initiation, that of the Transfiguration.

The next two signs, Aquarius and Pisces, show us the liberated Hercules at his work, the saving of the world. His tests are no longer personal and individual, but are universal in their application and demonstrate to us the inclusiveness of the consciousness and the vastness of the methods employed by the disciple who has climbed the mountain in Capricorn and has no longer any personal problems.

11. In *Aquarius* (January 21 – February 19, the Water Carrier), Hercules cleaned the Augean Stables by turning a river through them. They had not been cleaned for many years. Thus did he symbolically pour out the cleansing waters in service to man. This is the most important sign into which we are now entering; the most menial of all labours falls in this, next to the culminating labour of all. One may think with reverence of Jesus the Christ washing the feet of his disciples, after following the man with the water pitcher on his shoulder, into the upper room.

12. In *Pisces* (February 20 – March 20, the Fishes), we find by contrast the most exalted symbol. For here Hercules captured the Red Cattle, placed them in a golden bowl (the Holy Grail), and flew them to the Temple. Such is the crowning beauty of the sign in which man becomes a world saviour, all that is of animality having been redeemed and transcended.

This short analysis of the twelve labours will give us a somewhat synthetic picture of the work done by every disciple who is truly in earnest, as he progresses from Aries to Pisces. It is a work arduous, slow, and carried forward under great difficulties, and often in blind ignorance of the forces released and of the results to be achieved. But step by step, the aspirant is led along the path of self-knowledge. His character and nature have been tested and tried until the qualities which characterized the form have been transmuted into those which reveal the soul."

"In one analysis of discipleship, it has been defined as *a psychic solvent, which eats away all dross and leaves only the pure gold behind*. It is a process of refining, of sublimation and of transmutation, carried steadily forward until at length the Mount of Transfiguration and of Illumination is attained. The hidden mysteries and the forces latent in human beings need to be discovered and require to be utilized in a divine manner and in line with divine purpose, intelligently apprehended. When they have thus been utilized, the disciple finds himself en rapport with the universal and similar divine energies and powers, underlying the operations of the natural world. Thus he becomes a worker under the plan of evolution and a cooperator with that great *cloud of witnesses*, who through the power of their onlooking, and the result of their attainment, constitute the Thrones, Principalities and Powers through the medium of which the one Life guides all creation onwards to a glorious consummation."

"A symbol is an outer and visible form of an inner and spiritual reality."

"Man is torn in two directions: habit entices him to identify himself with form; a new understanding impels him to identify himself with the soul. A reorientation then takes place, and a new and self-directed effort is initiated, which is portrayed for us in the story of Hercules, the Sun-God. (...) The human being, hitherto swept along on the urge of the evolutionary tide, and governed by desire for experience and for material expression, comes tinder the control of the divine Indweller. He emerges as the aspirant reverses himself and begins to work through the twelve signs of the zodiac, only now working from Aries to Pisces via Taurus (anti-clockwise), instead of working in the ordinary human retrogressive fashion, from Aries to Taurus via Pisces (clockwise). Finally, the changing focus of life and the steady application to the twelve labours in the twelve signs enables the disciple to become the triumphant victor."

"We are told that Hercules had a divine father and an earthly mother, and so, as with all sons of God, we find the same basic symbology emerging. They typify in their persons the essential duality of God in manifestation, of life in form, of soul in body, and of spirit in matter. This duality is the glory of humanity, and also constitutes the problem which every human being has to solve. Father-Spirit and Mother-Matter meet together in man, and the work of the disciple is to withdraw himself from the bonds of the Mother and thus respond to the love of the Father."

"Whilst in the cradle, history relates, the lusty infant (Hercules) killed two serpents, again emphasizing duality. In this act, he forecast the future in which he demonstrated that the physical nature no longer controlled, but that he could strangle the serpent of matter and that the greater illusion no longer had him imprisoned. He slew the serpent of matter and the serpent of illusion. If the serpent symbology is studied, we shall find that three serpents are depicted: one standing for the serpent of matter, another for the serpent of illusion, and the third for the serpent of wisdom. This last serpent is only discovered when the other two have been slain."

"As Hercules grew up, we are told, great care was given to his education. He was trained in all possible accomplishments, and every faculty that he had was developed and organized. What is the lesson to be learned from this? It is the need to realize that every disciple, if he truly merits that name, must necessarily be a highly developed member of the human family. All three parts of his nature have to be unfolded: his mind must be well-stocked and functioning, and he must know how to use it; his sensitive emotional nature must be responsive to every type of contact; his physical body must be a fit medium of expression for the indwelling soul and equipped to undertake the tasks to which the man has pledged himself."

"We are told also that the height of Hercules was four cubits, a symbolic way of expressing the fact that he had achieved his full growth in all departments of his fourfold personality. Man, we are told, is the cube, *the city that stands foursquare*. Physically, emotionally and mentally, he was developed, and to these three factors is added a fourth: a soul in conscious possession of its mechanism, the developed personality. Having achieved his growth and having been trained in all that the world could give him, we are told next that he proceeded to slay his teacher. He killed them all and got rid of them. Why? Because he had reached the point where he could stand on his own feet, forming his own conclusions, guiding his own life, and handling his own affairs. It was necessary, therefore, to rid himself of all those who sought to supervise him; he had to break away from authority and set out to find his own way and make his own contacts with life."

"The next episode in his career is his marriage and the birth of three children, a symbolic way of expressing the truth that he made at-one-ment with Psyche, the soul. From that union, the three aspects of the soul were born or began to manifest themselves. He began to know the nature of the spiritual will and to use it in the directing of his life. He experienced the workings of spiritual love and became conscious of the need to serve. Spiritual mind began to reveal truth to him, and he saw the underlying purpose. These are the higher correspondences of the three aspects of the personality: his mind, his emotional nature, and his physical body."

"One of the first lessons that every beginner has to learn is the tremendous power that he mentally wields, and the amount of harm that he can cause (...) through the brood mares of his mind. (...) Hercules realized the harm that the brood mares were doing. (...) He determined to capture the brood mares, but he over-estimated himself. He did succeed in rounding them up and in capturing them, but he failed to realize their potency and strength, so he gave them to Abderis, the symbol of the lower personal self, to hold. But Hercules, the soul, and Abderis, the personality, in unison were needed to guard these devastating horses. Abderis alone was not strong enough, and what had been happening to the people in the neighborhood, happened to Abderis: the horses killed him. (...) Again the soul, in the person of Hercules, had to deal with the problem of wrong thought, and only when he becomes a one-pointed aspirant in the sign Sagittarius and in that sign kills the Man-Eating Birds does he really attain complete control of the thought processes of his nature."

“The consummation of the work that is undertaken in Taurus, and the result of the Taurian influence, is the glorification of matter and subsequent illumination through its medium. All that at present prevents the glory, which is the soul, and the radiance which emanates from God within the form, from shining forth in its full power, is the matter or form aspect. When that has been consecrated, purified and spiritualized, then the glory and the light can indeed shine through, and the moon aspect can, therefore, be exalted in Taurus. This is done through the influence of Venus, the symbol of earthly and of heavenly love, of both spiritual aspiration and of carnal desire, and Venus is fittingly, therefore, the ruler of this sign. She is, above everything else, love, the creator of beauty and rhythm and unity.”

“The bull, to Hercules, typified animal desire, and the many aspects of desire in the world of form which, in their totality, constitute the great illusion. (...) The bull of desire has to be caught and mastered and chased from one point to another in the life of the separated self, until the time comes when the aspirant can do what Hercules succeeded in doing: ride the bull. To ride an animal, in the ancient myths, signifies control. *The bull is not slaughtered; it is ridden and guided, and under the mastery of the man.*”

“The third labour, in the sign Gemini, concerns predominantly the active work of the aspirant on the physical plane as he comes to an understanding of himself. Before this active work becomes possible, there must be a cycle of interior thought and mystical longing, the striving after the vision and a subjective process carried on, perhaps for a very long time, before the man on the physical plane really begins the labour of unifying soul and body. This is the theme of this labour. It is in this physical plane achievement, and in the work of gaining the golden apples of wisdom, that the real test of the sincerity of the aspirant takes place. A longing to be good, a deep desire to ascertain the facts of the spiritual life, spasmodic efforts at self-discipline, at prayer and meditation, precede, almost inevitably, this real and steady effort. The visionary must become a man of action: desire has to be carried forward into the world of completion, and herein lies the test of Gemini. The physical plane (...) is the place where knowledge is gained and where that knowledge must be transmuted into wisdom. (...) In this labour, Hercules is faced with the tremendous task of bringing together the two poles of his being and of coordinating, or at-one-ing, soul and body, so that duality gives place to unity, and the pairs of opposites are blended.”

“Eurystheus sets Hercules the task of fetching the golden apples from the garden of the Hesperides. The apple has long figured in mythology and in symbology. In the garden of Eden, as we know, the serpent gave the apple to Eve; and with the giving of that apple, and with its acceptance came the knowledge of good and of evil. This is a symbolic method of telling us the story of the appearance of mind, and of how it began to function in that early creature, which was neither animal nor strictly human. With the coming of mind came also the knowledge of duality, of the pull of the pairs of opposites, of the nature of the soul, which is good, and of the nature of the form, which is evil if it holds the soul and hinders it from full expression. It is not evil *per se*. It is to be noted that in the garden of Eden, one

single apple was given to the human being: the symbol of separateness, isolation. Hercules had to hunt for the golden apples in another garden, and in the garden of the Hesperides, the apples were the symbol of plurality, of synthesis, and of the many, nourished by one tree of Life."

"In his search for the golden apples on the physical plane, Hercules had to conquer, as do all disciples, glamour and illusion; for in the carrying forward of spiritual aspiration, the disciple is very apt to be taken in by astralism and lower psychism in one form or another. As Hercules wrestled with the serpent, he found he could not overcome it until he discovered that it was invincible only so long as it was in contact with the earth. Just as soon as Hercules lifted Antaeus, the serpent, high into the air, it became utterly weak and unable to defeat him. Gemini is an air sign, a mutable or common sign. Glamour is ever changing, ever taking one form or another. It concerns appearance and not reality, and the earth stands for appearance."

"When the tests in Aries and in Taurus have been undergone, then, on the physical plane, in the field of the brain and in his walking consciousness, the disciple has to register contact with the soul and to recognize its qualities. He must no longer be the visionary mystic, but must add to the mystical achievement the occult knowledge of reality: (...) *the technique of the presence*; (...) *the privilege to possess*."

"Hercules, the disciple, has known the touch of the higher self, but he did not know enough to stay with Nereus. So he turns south, or back into the world. He has had his high moment, when he transcended his brain consciousness and held converse with his soul. But this does not last, and he drops back into the brain consciousness and enters upon another experience. He has to wrestle with Antaeus, the serpent. But this time, it is the serpent of astral glamour, and not primarily the serpent of desire. It is with the glammers of lower psychism that he has to wrestle, and these seem, in the early stages, inevitably to attract the interest of aspirants."

"The air has always been regarded as the symbol or element related to the Christ plane, called in the Theosophical terminology and in the East, the buddhic plane. The astral plane is the distorted reflection of the buddhic plane, and it is only when we carry glamour up into the clear light of the Christ soul that we shall see truth as it is, and become invincible."

"The opposite sign to Cancer is Capricorn, and these two constitute the two gates, one being the gate into form life, and the other into spiritual life; one opening the door into the mass form of the human family, and the other into the universal state of consciousness, which is the Kingdom of spirit. One marks the beginning of human experience on the physical plane; the other marks its climax. One signifies potentiality; the other signifies consummation."

"Cancer is the sign of instinct, of herd life, of mass reaction. It represents the subconscious mind, hereditary instinct, and the collective imagination. (...) The unevolved Cancer native is immersed in the mass; he is an unconscious part of the great whole, and therein lies the problem. For the average Cancer person, as well as the aspirant who is performing the labour of this sign, is subjected to the urge to lift himself up out of the mass to which he is held, by his instinct, and to develop instead the intuition, which will enable him to rise."

"The aspirant finds himself in Cancer, faced with the problem of finding that elusive, sensitive, and deeply occult, or hidden, spiritual intuition which will guide him in his now lonely journey. The aspirant is no longer identified and lost in the mass; he is no longer one of the sheep, safely guarded in the sheepfold; he is no longer one of the great herd of emigrants – he has emerged out of the mass and has started on the lonely way of all disciples. Then, he treads the path of tribulation, of test and trial, wrestling by himself as an individual, from Leo to Capricorn, until the time comes when, with the aid of instinct, intellect and intuition, and driven by the urge of the Christ life, he again merges himself with the masses and becomes identified with the group. He then becomes the world server in Aquarius and has no sense of separateness."

"The Nemean lion stands essentially for the coordinated, dominant personality, for the aspirant has always to be a highly evolved individual. (...) The Nemean lion symbolizes the powerful personality running wild and menacing the peace of the countryside."

"The sudden interjection of catastrophe into the pleasure-seeking existence of the Libran, harsh though the experience may be, is a necessity for the growth of the soul. Without such tragedies, the potentialities of Libra remain dormant. The Libran sets out upon his journey in winter, a time of bleakness when the personality life has lost its allure."

"We are told that Hercules seizes the hind legs of the boar and compels the beast to walk down the mountainside on its front legs, and that this spectacle excites the laughter of all who witness it. In this incident, we observe the Libran's ability to find unusual solutions, and to perceive the value of the incongruous. (...) The graphic description of Hercules driving the boar by its hind legs is a symbolic representation of the soul directing the ungainly body. This relationship in which each aspect achieves due importance is characteristic of the more highly organized Libran."

"Halfway between heaven and earth, the Libran waits. Looking above, he sees the vision, the golden dawn gilding a snow-capped mountain-top; gazing downwards, he beholds the sloughs and the mire through which the sons of men pass. On the one hand, he cognizes high ideals; on the other, he perceives them repudiated. At this midway point, he must stand and work. If he rises towards the ideal world, he loses touch with common things; if he descends to the level of materialistic activity, he loses the precious perceptions that are the mainspring of being. Between these two worlds he is poised in order that he might gain

understanding, an understanding that includes the highest and the lowest, the good and the bad, the lofty and the insignificant. This is compassion.”

“The constant weighing and measuring so characteristic of Libra have one aim: the establishment of equilibrium. (...) It should be pointed out that equilibrium, as here conceived, is a dynamic rather than a static condition – a balanced system of energies; (...) an ordered arrangement of energies directed and controlled by an over-arching will-to-good.”

“In Scorpio, on the astral plane, Hercules takes up again the work begun in Taurus, completes it and clears away the great mire, the great illusion, and stands free with the goal clear in front of him.”

“In Sagittarius, just as in Scorpio Hercules took up and completed the work started in Taurus, he took up and completed the work started in Aries. In Aries, he was dealing with thought at its source. In this sign, he demonstrates complete control of thought and speech. Sagittarius has sometimes been called *the sign of the effect of Scorpio*. The moment we have freed ourselves from illusion, that moment we enter into Sagittarius and we see the goal. We have never really seen it before, because between us and the goal, there is always to be found that cloud of thought forms that prevents us from seeing it.”

“Sagittarius is the sign preparatory to Capricorn, and it is called in some ancient books *the sign of silence*. In ancient mysteries, the newly admitted brother had to sit in silence; he was not allowed to walk or speak; he had to be, to work and to watch, because one cannot enter the fifth kingdom in nature, the spiritual kingdom, or climb the mountain of Capricorn, until there has been restraint of speech and control of thought. That is the lesson of Sagittarius: restraint of speech through control of thought. (...) Right use of thought, restraint of speech, and consequent harmlessness on the physical plane, result in liberation; for we are held in the human unit, we are imprisoned to the planet not by some outside force that holds us there, but by what we ourselves have said and done. The moment we no longer set up wrong relations with people by the things we say that should not have been said, the moment we stop thinking things about people that we should not think, little by little those ties that hold us to planetary existence are severed: we are freed and we climb the mountain like the goat in Capricorn.”

“Sagittarius is a sign of power. The true Sagittarian is a very potent person, potent because of his silence and one-pointedness: the goal is seen for the first time clearly; it is the period preceding the birth of the Christ. Sagittarius, we are told, is the spirit of truth; it is the sum of all Truth growing out of individual revelation.”

“In Sagittarius, we find the gift of power. Do you feel able to have power? One definition of an occultist is a human being who works in the world of powers and forces. I do not know anyone who can safely be trusted to wield power. Why? Because Sagittarius has not done its work. Restraint of speech has not yet been learned. Control of thought has not been mastered, and the soul is not potent

enough. When we love enough, we may have power. When we love enough and are harmless enough, then the gates of heaven and hell will be put into our hands, but not before."

"We read that the marshes of Acadia were filled with man-eating birds. (...) Marshes are a symbol of the mind plus emotion. (...) We must get the birds out of the marshes and into the clear air where we can see them and conquer them. The birds that did the most harm were three in number. In one book, they are enumerated: cruel gossip; talk of self, selfish talk; and casting of pearls before swine."

"An initiate is a person who is no longer placing his consciousness in his mind, or desires, or physical body. He can use these if he chooses, and he does, to help all humanity – but that is not where his consciousness is focused. He is focused in what we call the soul, which is that aspect of ourselves which is free from form. It is in soul consciousness that we eventually function in Capricorn, know ourselves to be initiates, and enter upon two great universal signs of service to humanity."

"The hallmark of the initiate is silence."

"Impersonality is based upon a fundamental personality achievement. You must have been tremendously attached before you can know the meaning of impersonality. That is a paradox, but there is no achievement in being impersonal if there is no temptation to be personal."

"It is a rule in occultism that, on the ladder of initiation, if you cannot live purely in your own home circle, you are of no use in heaven or hell."

"You go through your own personal hell before you can go through the universal hell. (...) You learn the nature of the universal by individual experience; only that is realization."

"Christianity has not failed; it has never been tried."

"In Aquarius, the disciple becomes the serving master. (...) He can be master because he has learned to serve; and he can serve because he is a master – those two go together."

"The symbolism of the red cattle is plainly that of the lower desires, desire being ever an outstanding characteristic of humanity. They are guarded by a shepherd, which is the mind, the two-headed dog representing the matter aspect and the psychic nature. You see why Hercules spared the shepherd. The mind can still be the shepherd of the cattle, but the two-headed dog, the psychic-emotional nature and the matter aspect, Hercules killed, which means that they were deprived of any power. The shepherd still had power, and I can conceive of no time in which a human being in incarnation will not need to use the mind as the interpreter of spiritual energy."

"The sign Pisces marks a symbol of reality. (...) Pisces is the sign of death to the personality. (...) It also means the death of a world savior, for it is the sign of crucifixion and marks the end of the zodiacal cycle."

"No man is ever put into circumstances which are insurmountable, once he has reached the point where he has intelligently put himself on the side of evolution, or of God. Prior to that, he may, and will, be driven by gales of circumstance; the press of group and racial karma will force him into situations necessary for the process of awakening him to his own innate possibilities. Once he becomes the conscious builder himself, seeking to control the forces and builders of his lower nature, and to construct the Temple of Solomon, then he is no longer subject to the earlier conditions. He becomes a ruler, a builder, and a transmitter."

"Every step of the way has to be carried out by man himself, and there is no short or easy road out of darkness into light."

"Nothing in heaven or hell, on earth or elsewhere, can prevent the progress of the man who has awakened to the illusion, who has glimpsed the reality beyond the glamour of the astral plane, and who has heard, even if only once, the clarion call of his own soul."

"Persist. Failure never prevents success. Difficulties develop the strength of the soul. The secret of success is ever to stand steady and to be impersonal."

"Peace will be the result of understanding and sharing, and not the origin of them, as the pacifists so often imply."

"The majority of true esotericists are found outside, and not within, the bulk of the schools which call themselves esoteric."

"Power selfishly used exhausts its user; (...) he is thereby destroyed."

"Every step forward in evolution and, therefore, towards the spiritual goal, is always at a cost, and through the relinquishing of that which has hitherto been held dear."

"The habit of goodness, of right reaction, and of instinctual understanding, is distinctive to the trained initiate. He has no need to remember rules, theories, planes or activities. These are as much an established part of his nature as the instinct of self-preservation is an instinctive part of the equipment of a normal human being. (...) The trained initiate needs not recollect."

"The bulk of human beings are still too hungry, too devastated psychically, too bewildered and distressed, and too unsure of their future, their freedom and their security, to be in any condition to listen to Him."

"By holding, man loses; by relinquishing, he gains; by seeking to grasp that which he has, it must and will inevitably disappear."

"A brief period of organized effort and, at the end, death, is of more vital usefulness today, than a futile doing of the things a man feels like doing in a leisurely way, and then meandering feebly down the years."

"One of the first lessons which a disciple needs to learn, is that where he thinks he is strongest and where he finds the most satisfaction, is very frequently the point of greatest danger and of weakness."

"I would remind you that the life of the disciple is ever a life of risks and of dangers, entered into willingly and deliberately in the cause of spiritual unfoldment, and the service of humanity."

"That which appears is not always that which truly is; that which rends and disrupts the personality life is frequently the agent of release, if rightly apprehended."

"Go your own way with strength and silence and do that which your soul demands. Let not the lesser voices of the loved and near deflect you from the progress upon the path of service."

"The reactions of others are not your responsibility. (...) Your responsibility is strength and detachment. (...) Shoulder not responsibilities which are not yours."

"Learn to keep the things that concern yourself to yourself."

"The soul that cannot stand alone has naught to give."

"Initiation is the demonstration of intuitive understanding put to practical expression."

"By the time a disciple reaches the age of forty-nine, his pathway of life should be clearly defined. (...) Unless a certain measure of fusion is established by the time fifty-six years of age is attained, it is seldom established later. (...) The sixty-third year of your life, as in the life of all disciples, will be one of crisis and of supreme opportunity."

"The fivefold experience in any individual life takes place in the following order in the life of the average intelligent aspirant who responds to and takes advantage of the civilization and education of the present time:

1. Appropriation of the physical sheath. This takes place between the fourth and seventh year, when the soul, hitherto overshadowing, takes possession of the physical vehicle.
2. A crisis during adolescence, wherein the soul appropriates the astral vehicle. This crisis is not recognized by the general public, and is only dimly sensed, from its evidenced temporary abnormalities, by the average psychologist. They do not recognize the cause, but only the effects.

3. A similar crisis between the twenty-first and twenty-fifth years, wherein the mind vehicle is appropriated. The man should then begin to respond to egoic influences, and in case of the advanced man, he frequently does.
4. A crises between the thirty-fifth and forty-second year, wherein conscious contact with the soul is established; the threefold personality then begins to respond, as a unit.
5. For the remaining years of life, there should be an increasingly strong relationship between the soul and its vehicles, leading to another crises between the fifty-sixth and the sixty-third year. According to that crisis will depend the future usefulness of the person, and whether the ego continues to use the vehicles on into old age, or whether there is a gradual withdrawal of the indwelling entity.

There are many corresponding cycles of crisis in the life history of any soul down through the ages, but these major five crises can be traced with clarity from the standpoint of higher vision."

"Your major need is for an intensification of your inner spiritual aspiration. (...) It is intensity of purpose which will change you from the plodding, fairly satisfactory aspirant, into the disciple whose heart and mind are aflame, (...) with everything subordinated to the life of discipleship. (...) This means eliminating the nonessentials and concentrating on the essentials – the inner essentials as they concern the soul and its relation to the personality, and the outer ones, as they concern you and your environment."

"Your major task, as aspirants, is to cultivate the higher sensitivity, to render yourselves so pure and selfless that your mind remains undisturbed by the happenings in the three worlds, to seek that attentive spiritual sense which will enable you to be impressed, and then to interpret correctly the impressions received."

"When illusion and glamour have both been overcome, the astral body fades out in the human consciousness."

"One of the most vital things every aspirant has to do, is to learn to understand the astral plane, to comprehend its nature, and to learn both to stand free from it and to work on it. The moment a man can 'see' on the astral plane, and can achieve equilibrium and hold steady in the midst of its vibrating forces, that moment he is ready for initiation."

"The astral plane is the plane of illusion, of glamour, and of a distorted presentation of reality. (...) Through this illusory panorama, the aspirant has to make his way, finding the clue or thread which will lead him out of the maze, and holding fast to each tiny fragment of reality as it presents itself to him, learning to distinguish truth from glamour, the permanent from the impermanent, and the certainty from the unreal. No glamour, no illusion can hold the man who has set himself the task of treading the razor-edged Path which leads through the

wilderness, through the thick-set forest, through the deep waters of sorrow and distress, through the valley of sacrifice and over the mountains of vision to the gate of Deliverance. He may travel sometimes in the dark, and the illusion of darkness is very real; he may travel sometimes in a light so dazzling and bewildering that he can scarcely see the way ahead; he may know what it is to falter on the Path, and to drop under the fatigue of service and of strife; he may be temporarily sidetracked and wander down the by-paths of ambition, of self-interest and of material enchantment – but the lapse will be brief.”

“It is maya itself which serves to guide man into truth and knowledge; it is on the plane of the astral that the heresy of separateness has to be overcome.”

“Astrology is essentially the purest presentation of the occult truth in the world at this time, because it is the science which deals with those conditioning and governing forces which play through and upon the whole field of space, and all that is found within that field. When this fact is grasped and the sources of those energies are better comprehended, and the nature of the field of space is correctly understood, then we shall see a far wider and at the same time a more closely related horizon. The relationships between individual, planetary, systemic and cosmic entities will be grasped, and we shall then begin to live scientifically. It is this scientific living which it is the immediate purpose of astrology to bring about.”

“I cannot too strongly repeat that esoteric astrology is entirely concerned with the forces and energies which affect the consciousness aspect of the human being and condition the personality life. This is the point which must be considered above all else. In other words, esoteric astrology is concerned with the soul, and not with the form, and therefore, all that I have to say refers to consciousness, to its expansion, to its effect upon its vehicles, the form, and, in the last analysis, with the science of initiation.”

“No man has ever been saved by theology, but only by the living Christ.”

“There is no need for any man to join the Christian Church in order to be affiliated with Christ.”

“The development of the human being is but the passing from one state of consciousness to another. It is a succession of expansions.”

“All progression in the realm of consciousness is, naturally, by a graded series of awakenings.”

“Unless moments of crisis occur, the life simmers down to a general dead level and offers not the chance for an extreme effort with its consequent need to draw upon the full resources of the soul. (...) The handling of crisis is the hallmark of the disciple, and every crisis met and rightly handled provides the place from which an extended vision can be gained.”

“Death is in itself a work of restitution. It involves the work of rendering back of substance to the three worlds of substance, and doing it willingly and gladly; it involves also the restoration of the human soul to the soul form whence it emanated, and doing this in the joy of reabsorption. We must all learn to look upon death as an act of restitution, and when we can do this, death will take on a new light and true meaning, and it will become an integral part of a constant living process.”

“The whole secret of success in treading the occult path depends upon an attitude of mind: when the attitude is one of concrete materialism, of concentration upon form, and a desire for the things of the present moment, little progress can be made in apprehending the higher esoteric truths.”

“Where there is steady growth, an application to occult principles, so that definite changes are produced in the bodies used, and an increasing radiator light, it is known and recorded, and the aspirant is rewarded by increased opportunity to serve his fellowmen.”

“The worker in white magic must hold himself free as much as he can from identifying himself with that which he has created or has attempted to create. The secret for all aspirants is to cultivate the attitude of the onlooker and the silent watcher.”

“It is only in a spirit of real detachment that the best work of a disciple is done. The disciple comes to realize that because of his detachment, he is for the remainder of his life simply a worker, with supposedly no personality inclinations, objectives or wishes.”

“A disciple is one who seeks to learn a new rhythm, to enter a new field of experience, and to follow the steps of that advanced humanity who have trodden ahead of him the path, leading from darkness to light, from the unreal to the real. He has tasted the joys of life in the world of illusion and has learnt their powerlessness to satisfy and hold him. Now he is in a state of transition between the new and old stages of being; he is vibrating between the condition of soul awareness and form awareness – he is ‘seeing double’.”

“Obey the inward impulses of the soul. (...) *I must to my own Self be true* – (...) only thus will the aspirant train himself in spiritual discrimination and learn to recognize truth in all things. Only thus will the reality be arrived at and the true Self be known. (...) The disciple must depend upon himself and upon the conclusions he himself has come to in his moments of spiritual communion and illumination.”

“It is only as the disciple is willing to relinquish all in the service of the Great One, and to hold naught back, that liberation is achieved and the body of desire becomes transmuted into the body of higher intuition. (...) The goal is reached by the path of renunciation. (...) The single eye, the unalloyed desire, the consecrated purpose, and the ear that turns in deafness to all of earth’s noise – such is the aim for the disciple.”

“The problem of all disciples remains the same. This is to live simultaneously the acutely sensitive inner life of the pilgrim upon the path of life, and the life of a human being in the world of human events; to live the individual life of the pledged disciple, and the mass life of humanity; to fulfil his own spiritual destiny, through the medium of a controlled personality, and, at the same time, to participate fully in the life of humanity upon Earth – this is no easy task.”

“The disciple has to take himself as he is, at any time, with a given equipment, and under any given circumstances; he then proceeds to subordinate himself, his affairs and his time to the need of the hour, particularly during the phase of group, national or world crisis. When he does this within his own consciousness and is, therefore, thinking along lines of the true values, he will discover that his own private affairs are taken care of, his capacities are increased, and his limitations are forgotten.”

“Discipline involves the focusing of the disciple’s energies, his time and his resources; (...) it requires a consecration of the thought-life (...) and a forgetfulness of self which would rule out all moods and feelings, all personality desires, resentments, grievances, and all pettiness in relation to fellowmen. On the physical plane, it would mean the conditioning of all active, outer living, so that the whole of life becomes one focused active service.”

“The physical disciplines are of value in the beginning stage, and impart a sense of proportion and awareness of defects and of limitations. These have their place in time and space, and that is all. Once the world of the soul is entered, the disciple uses all forms wisely, with understanding of their purpose, and with freedom from excess – he is not preoccupied with them or fundamentally interested in them. His eyes are off himself and fixed on the world of true values.”

“The individual eliminates the astral body by means of his growing desire for mental life. He withdraws gradually and steadily into the mind body, and the astral body esoterically ‘drops away’ and finally disappears. This takes place usually unconsciously, and may require quite a long time. Where, however, the man is above the average, and on the verge of becoming a manasic person, the disappearance is brought about suddenly and dynamically, and the man stands free in his mental body. This takes place consciously and rapidly. (...) This he does by calling in increased light from the soul. It is soul light which, at this stage, dissolves the astral substance.”

“The life of the occult student is consciously lived in the world of energies.”

“The work of the occultist and of the aspirant is to arrive at an understanding of these forces, and so to learn their nature and their use, their potency and vibratory rate.”

“All that is occurring is an evidence of energy and is expressive of force. That is the factor never to be forgotten.”

“Man moves in a whirlpool of forces of all types. He is composed of energies in every part of his manifested and unmanifested expression; he is, therefore, related to all other energies.”

“The disciple learns eventually to know himself to be, above everything else, the director of forces: these he directs from the altitude of the divine Observer, and through the attainment of detachment.”

“The keynotes upon which the occult philosophy is built are: 1) There is naught in manifestation except organized energy. 2) Energy follows or conforms itself to thought.”

“Behind all happenings in the world of phenomena exists the world of energies; these are of the greatest diversity and complexity, but all of them move and work under the Law of Cause and Effect. The first task of the esotericist is to comprehend the nature of the energies which are seeking to condition him and which work out into expression on the physical plane through the medium of his equipment, or his vehicle of manifestation.”

“Events, circumstances, happenings and physical phenomena of every kind are simply symbols of what is occurring in the inner worlds, and it is into these worlds that the esotericist must enter as far as his perception permits.”

“The etheric body is the mould of the physical body. The etheric body is the archetype upon which the dense physical form is built. (...) In dealing with the etheric body, we are dealing with physical matter. (...) It is through the etheric body that all the energies flow, whether emanating from the soul, or from the sun, or from a planet.”

“When man is on the Path of Discipleship and, therefore, upon the reversed wheel, leading to initiation, the etheric body becomes the transmitter of soul energy and not of personality force.”

“The Kingdom of God is not something which will descend on Earth when man is good enough. It is something which is functioning efficiently today, and demanding recognition. (...) The citizens of the Kingdom of God are all those who are deliberately seeking the light, and attempting, through self-imposed discipline, to stand before the One Initiator.”

“The human being is influenced upon the path of evolution from above downwards; the initiate is directed from within upwards.”

“For the man who is upon the path of discipleship, the battlefield is primarily that of glamour. (...) Glamour is illusion on the astral plane. (...) In the process of dissipating glamour, the way of the greatest potency is to realize the necessity to act purely as a channel for the energy of the soul. If the disciple can make right alignment and consequent contact with his soul, the results show as increased light. (...) Alignment, contact with the soul, and then steadfastness are the keynotes to success.”

“Behind the manifested universe stands the formless One.”

“No man can make definite and specialized progress without his brother benefiting, this benefiting taking the form of:

1. the increase of the total consciousness of the group;
2. the stimulation of units in the group;
3. the group magnetism producing increased healing or blending effects upon allied groups.”

“Man is intended to be the intelligent arbiter of his own destiny, and a conscious exponent of his own innate divinity, of the God within.”

“The goal of all teaching given in the real esoteric schools is to put man consciously in touch with his own soul, and not with the Master.” (as opposed to the glamorous promise of the ‘illusion of guidance’ held out in false exploitative esoteric schools, which actually aim at reducing the student to unquestioning obedience to a perceived external authority, to compliance with the orders given by the leaders of a hierarchical organization, and ultimately, to complete servitude, complete dependence on this organization)

“A horoscope is frequently quite accurate in its delineation for the unevolved and for the unawakened, but is quite in error and at fault in the case of the highly evolved man. (...) An advanced individual can offset the influence of the planets, and thus so dominate his personality life that prediction and certainty, as to activity and circumstance, are no longer possible. The soul is dominating, and the planets cease to condition life.”

“Initiation is a strictly personal matter. (...) It rests upon the inner attainment of the initiate. The initiate will know for himself when the event occurs and needs no one to tell him of it.”

“Initiation is in truth the name given to the revelation of the new vision which ever draws the disciple onward into greater light; it is not something conferred upon him or given to him.”

“The bulk of the human race is composed of human beings who create nothing, but who are only swept into activity under the urge of circumstance.”

“The man who is consciously learning to build has, first of all, to hold the idea sufficiently long for it to be faithfully registered in the physical brain.”

“As long as the attention of the creator of any thought-form, great or small, is turned towards it, that magnetic link persists, the thought-form is vitalized, and its work carried on. When the work has been accomplished and the thought-form has served its purpose, every creator, consciously or unconsciously, turns his attention elsewhere, and the thought-form disintegrates.”

"Much of the ineffectiveness of people is due to the fact that their interests are not centralized, but very diffuse, and no one thing engrosses their attention. They scatter their energy and are attempting to satisfy every wandering desire, and to dabble in everything which comes their way. Therefore, no thought they think ever assumes a proper form or is ever duly energized."

"From the esoteric angle, evolution means a steadily increasing sensitivity to light and illumination."

"A Master has no personality at all; his divine nature is all that he has. The form through which he works is a created image, the product of a focused will and the creative imagination – it is not the product of desire, as in the case of the human being."

"Every expenditure of force on the part of a Master or Teacher is subjected to wise foresight and discrimination."

"The personality is a triple combination of forces, impressing and absolutely controlling the fourth aspect of the personality, which is the dense physical body. The three personality types of energy are the *etheric body*, which is the vehicle of vital energy, the *astral body*, which is the vehicle of the feeling energy or sentient force, and the *mental body*, which is the vehicle of the intelligent energy of will, that is destined to be the dominant creative aspect. These forces constitute the lower man."

"As we have studied the various constellations, it will have become apparent to you that the main function of the planets is to be distributing agents for the energies emanating from the zodiac, as they converge within our solar system, and become attracted to our planet."

"The Probationary Path marks that period in the life of a man when he definitely sets himself on the side of the forces of evolution and works at the building of his own character. He takes himself in hand, cultivates the qualities that are lacking in his disposition, and seeks with diligence to bring his personality under control. He is building the causal body with deliberate intent, and seeking to make it a fit receptacle for the Christ principle. (...) The Probationary Path is a path on which steady expansion of consciousness is undergone with increasing sensitivity to the higher vibrations."

"There is no power on Earth which can prevent the advance of man towards his destined goal, and no combination of powers can hold him back."

"Man has consciously to bring about his own liberation."

"The soul must relinquish the personality. For ages, the soul has identified with the lower personal self, and through the agency of that lower self, has gained experience and acquired much knowledge. The time has to come when that agency is no longer dear to the soul, and their respective positions are reversed."

“Revelation seldom breaks in all its completed beauty into the consciousness of the disciple; it is a gradual and steadily unfolding process.”

“Truth has to be wrought out in the texture of daily living before new truth can be safely imparted.”

“The goal of realization for man is consciousness of the nature of the Soul, the medium through which the Spirit ever works. More it is not possible for him to do.”

“The little evolved cannot comprehend the much evolved; the advanced ego comprehends not an initiate. The greater can apprehend the lesser, but the reverse is not the case.”

“Naught can defeat the purpose of the soul. (...) There comes a stage when a man is verily and indeed ‘founded on the rock’ – though he may experience the alternation of light and shade, though the waves of the purifying waters may roll over him. (...) Then, the initiate knows himself to be the onlooking Unity, watching the phenomenal phantasmagoria of life in the form.”

Alice A. Bailey

7 deadly sins / 7 cardinal sins / 7 capital vices

“Identification is the only sin.” (Osho)

“They plunge a man deep into the mire of this world, so that he makes it his god.”

The 7 cardinal sins drive the spiritual energy into delusion / identification with the relative / ephemeral worldly experience, thereby building up the ego.

Sin = misdirected energy, absence of insight, unconsciousness, lack of devotion.

1) pride / hubris / vanity

= devotion to the ego, thereby severing the spirit from God

corresponding virtue: humility

2) greed

= artificial, rapacious desire for anything worldly, especially material possessions

corresponding virtue: charity / generosity

3) lust

= intense longing for any worldly experience

corresponding virtue: chastity

4) envy / jealousy

= resentful covetousness towards the traits or possessions of someone else

corresponding virtue: gratitude

5) gluttony

= overindulgence in anything worldly

corresponding virtue: temperance, moderation

6) wrath

= uncontrolled feelings of anger, rage, hatred

corresponding virtue: patience

7) sloth

= absence of interest / habitual disinclination to exertion / indifference to our duties and obligations to God

including: *acedia*

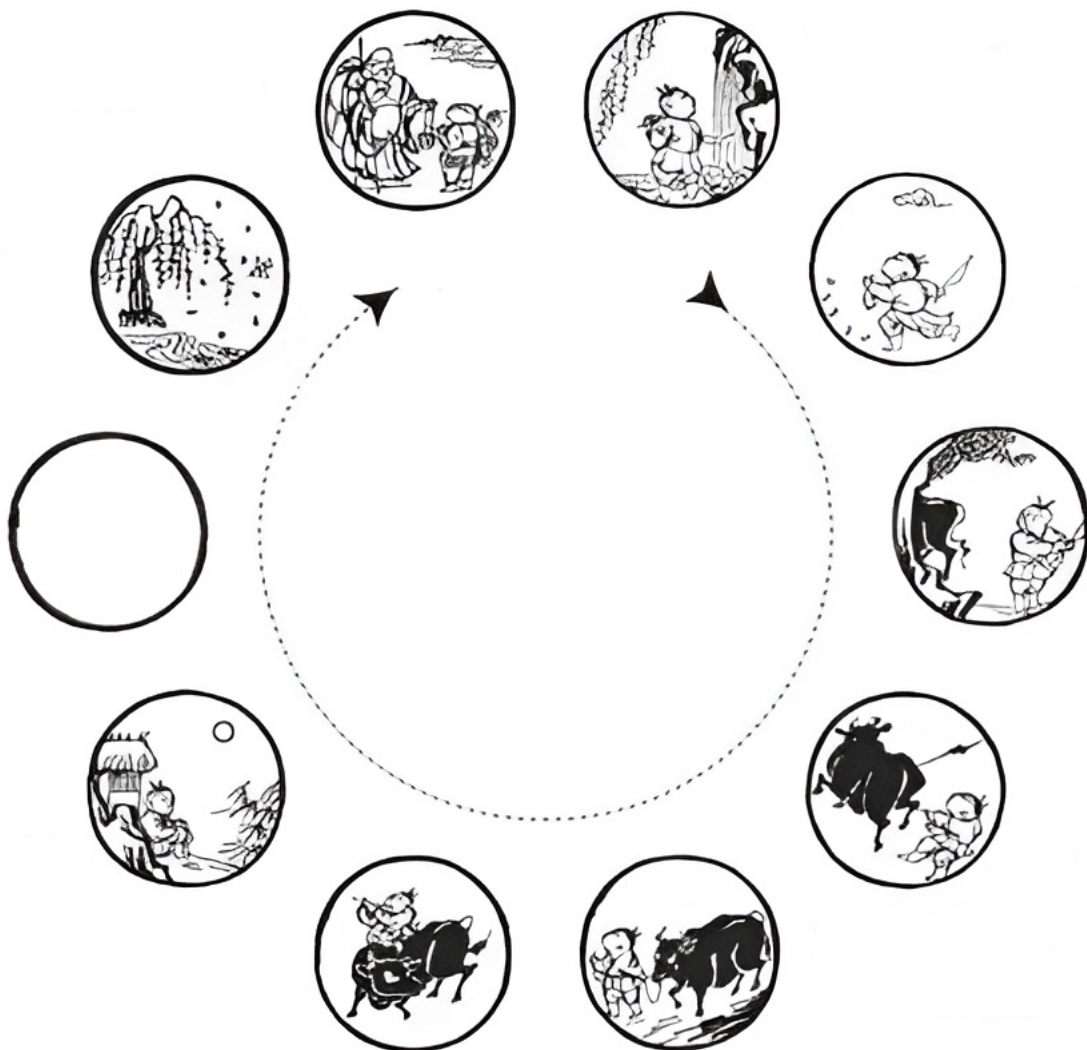
= apathetic listlessness, depression without joy, leading to neglect to take care of one's duty toward God;

failure to love God with all one's mind, all one's heart and all one's soul

corresponding virtue: diligence, industry

The Ten Bulls of Zen / The Ten Oxherding Pictures

(In Search of the Inner Self)



1 The search for the bull

*In the pasture of this world,
I endlessly push aside the tall grasses
in search of the bull.*

*Following unnamed rivers,
lost upon the interpenetrating paths
of distant mountains,
My strength failing and my vitality
exhausted, I cannot find the bull.*

*I only hear the locusts chirring
through the forest at night.*



2 Discovering the footprint

*Along the riverbank under the trees,
I discover footprints!*

*Even under the fragrant grass
I see his prints.
Deep in remote mountains
they are found.*

*These traces no more can be hidden
than one's nose, looking heavenward.*



3 Perceiving the bull

I hear the song of the nightingale.

*The sun is warm, the wind is mild,
willows are green along the shore,
Here no bull can hide!*

*What artist can draw that
massive head, those majestic horns?*



4 Catching the bull

I seize him with a terrific struggle.

*His great will and power
are inexhaustible.*

*He charges to the high plateau
far above the cloud-mists,
Or in an impenetrable ravine
he stands.*



5 Taming the bull

*The whip and rope are necessary,
Else he might stray off down
some dusty road.*

*Being well trained,
he becomes naturally gentle.*

Then, unfettered, he obeys his master.



6 Riding the bull home

*Mounting the bull,
slowly I return homeward.*

*The voice of my flute intones
through the evening.*

*Measuring with hand-beats
the pulsating harmony,
I direct the endless rhythm.*

Whoever hears this melody will join me.



7 The bull transcended

Astride the bull, I reach home.

I am serene. The bull too can rest.

*The dawn has come. In blissful repose,
Within my thatched dwelling
I have abandoned the whip and rope.*



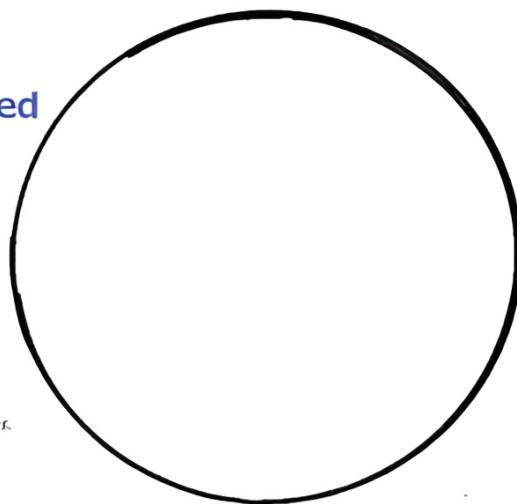
8 Both bull and self transcended

*Whip, rope, person, and bull --
all merge in No-Thing.*

*This heaven is so vast
no message can stain it.*

*How may a snowflake exist
in a raging fire?*

Here are the footprints of the patriarchs.



9 Reaching the source

*Too many steps have been taken
returning to the root and the source.*

*Better to have been blind
and deaf from the beginning!*

*Dwelling in one's true abode,
unconcerned with that without --*

*The river flows tranquilly on
and the flowers are red.*



10 In the world

*Barefooted and naked of breast,
I mingle with the people of the world.*

*My clothes are ragged and dust-laden,
and I am ever blissful.*

I use no magic to extend my life;

*Now, before me,
the dead trees become alive.*



Travelling the Path of Love – Sayings of Sufi Masters

“And we are guided by their footprints.”

- 1. The Sufi**
- 2. The Path**
- 3. The Teacher and the Disciple**
- 4. The Longing of the Heart**
- 5. Remembrance**
- 6. Meditation and Prayer**
- 7. Suffering and Surrender**
- 8. Polishing the Heart**
- 9. Light upon Light**
- 10. The Lover and the Beloved**
- 11. The Valley of Love**
- 12. Knowledge of God**
- 13. Wheresoever you Turn...**
- 14. Annihilation of the Self**
- 15. Union**

1. The Sufi

Sufism is defined as "truth without form", and the Sufi aspires to become "featureless and formless", to be so lost in God that only He remains. But there are certain qualities that belong to these travellers on the path.

"The Sufis are folk who have preferred God to everything, so that God has preferred them to everything."

"The Sufi is he who aims, from at first, at reaching God, the Creative Truth. Until he has found what he seeks, he takes no rest, nor does he give heed to any person. For Thy sake I haste over land and water; over the plain I pass and the mountains I cleave and from everything I turn my face, until the time when I reach that place where I am alone with Thee."

"To be a Sufi is to give up all worries and there is no worse worry than yourself. When you are occupied with self you are separated from God. The way to God is but one step: the step out of yourself."

"The Sufi is absent from himself and present with God."

"A Sufi is a day that needs no sun, a night that needs no moon or star, and a non-being that needs no being."

"Sufism means that God causes you to die to yourself and gives you life in Him."

"The Sufi is separated from mankind and united with God, as God has said, 'And I chose thee for Myself', that is, He separated him from all others."

"To be a Sufi means to abide continuously with God and to be at peace."

"The Sufi is pleased with all that God does in order that God may be pleased with all that he does."

"Sufism is that the servant acts according to whatever is most fitting to the moment."

"When al-Junayd was asked about the mystic, he replied, 'The color of water is the color of its container. That is, the nature of the mystic is always determined by the nature of his state at a given moment.' "

"One of the attributes of the saint is that he has no fear, for fear is anticipating some disagreeable event that might come or expecting that something beloved might pass away in the future. The saint is concerned only with the present moment. He has no future to fear."

"The Sufi is like the earth, on which every foul thing is thrown and from which fair things come forth."

"A man will not be a mystic until he is like the earth – both the righteous and the sinner tread upon it; and until he is like the clouds – they shade all things; and until he is like the rain – it waters all things, whether it loves them or not."

"When Abu Said ibn Abi-l-Khayr was asked what Sufism entailed he replied: 'Whatever you have in your mind – forget it; whatever you have in your hand – give it; whatever is to be your fate – face it!'"

"The Sufi is he to whom nothing is attached, and who does not become attached to anything."

"Be in this world as if you are a traveller, a passer-by, with your clothes and shoes full of dust. Sometimes you sit under the shade of a tree, sometimes you walk in the desert. Be always a passer-by, for this is not home."

"*Dervishes* is a term which refers to holy poverty: 'the poor man is not he whose hand is empty of provisions, but he whose nature is empty of desires'."

"A dervish wearing a sackcloth coat and woolen cap once came to meet Master Abu Ali. One of Abu Ali's disciples tried to humor him, saying, 'How much did you purchase that sackcloth for?' The dervish answered, 'I purchased it for the sum of the world. I was offered the hereafter in exchange, but refused to trade.'"

"Sufism means that you possess nothing and nothing possesses you."

"Only the bondsmen are free!"

"The Sufi is he that keeps a pure heart towards God."

"You are a Sufi when your heart is as soft and as warm as wool."

"Sufism is staying at the lover's door even when you are driven away."

"Dervishes are a brotherhood of migrants who keep watch on the world and for the world."

"Four thousand years before God created these bodies, He created the souls and kept them beside Himself and shed a light upon them. He knew what quantity each soul received and He showed favor to each in proportion to its illumination. The souls remained all that time in light, until they became fully nourished. Those who in this world live in joy and agreement with one another must have been akin to one another in that place. Here they love one another and are called the friends of God, and they are brothers who love one another for God's sake. These souls know one another by smell, like horses."

"If you keep the company of the truthful, be truthful with them, for they are spies of the heart. They come into your hearts and leave without your becoming aware."

"God speaks out of the innermost being of the mystic while he is silent."

"Sufism is not preached, and it is even taught in some cases by example and guidance which may be unknown to the learner's ordinary faculties."

"The Sufi bows down before none but God."

"There was a king, who, one day, entering his royal court, observed one person who among all those present, was not bowing down before him. Unnerved by the impudent act of this stranger in the hall, the king called out: 'How dare you not bow down before me! Only God does not bow down before me, and there is nothing greater than God. Who then are you?' The tattered stranger answered with a smile, 'I am that nothing.'"

"The true Sufi is he that is nothing."

2. The Path

The mystical path is the soul's journey from separation back to union. On this homeward journey we are seeking our own innermost essence, the pearl of great price that lies hidden within the heart.

"The Sufi travels three Journeys – the Journey from God, the Journey to God, and the Journey in God."

"Your journey is towards your homeland. Remember you are travelling from the world of appearances to the world of Reality."

"No one by himself
can find the Path to Him
Whoever goes to His street
goes with His feet."

"If you walk toward Him, He comes to you running."

"The first step is to cease isolating oneself from God."

"You too put your best foot forward. If you do not wish to, then follow your fantasies. But if you prefer the secrets of the love of your soul you will sacrifice everything. You will lose what you consider valuable, but you will soon hear the sacramental word 'Enter'."

"An intending disciple said to Dhu-I-Nun, the Egyptian: 'Above everything in this world I wish to enroll in the Path of Truth.' Dhu-I-Nun told him: 'You can accompany our caravan only if you first accept two things. One is that you will have to do things which you do not want to do. The other is that you will not be permitted to do things which you desire to do. It is wanting which stands between man and the Path of Truth.' "

"Take one step
 Away from yourself and –
 Behold! – the Path!"

"Know that when you learn to lose yourself, you will reach the Beloved. There is no other secret to be learnt, and more than that is not known to me."

"A man came to Abu Ali ad-Daqqaq and said, 'I have come to you from a very distant place.' Abu Ali ad-Daqqaq replied, 'Attaining knowledge of the path has nothing to do with traversing great distances and undergoing journeys. Separate from yourself even by one single step, and your goal will be reached.' "

"I saw my Lord in my dreams and I asked, 'How am I to find You?' He replied, 'Leave yourself and come!' "

"He travels with whoever looks for Him, and having taken the seeker by the hand, He arouses him to go in search of himself."

"In your own land seek the hidden flame... It is unworthy of man to borrow light from elsewhere."

"If you are man enough for this path you must take your heart in mind. That, so the specialists say, is the only work worthy of the name."

"When you seek God, seek Him in your heart – He is not in Jerusalem, nor in Mecca, nor in the *haji*."

"The minute I heard my first love story,
I started looking for you
Not knowing how blind I was.

Lovers don't finally meet somewhere.
They're in each other all along."

"When truth has taken hold of a heart she empties it of all but Herself."

"God is jealous, and one sign of His jealousy is that He does not clear any way through to Himself other than Himself."

"Abul Hasan Pusanji was asked, 'What is faith and what is trust in God?' He replied: 'You eat what is in front of you and chew each mouthful well with a tranquil heart, knowing that whatever belongs to you, you will not lose.' "

“One day a man from Mount Locam came to visit Sari al-Saqati. ‘Sheikh So-and-So from mount Locam greets you,’ he said. ‘He dwells in the mountains,’ commented Sari. ‘So his efforts amount to nothing. A man ought to be able to live in the midst of the market and be so preoccupied with God that not for a single minute is he absent from God.’ ”

“Our way is that of group discussion. In solitude there is renown and in renown there is peril. Welfare is to be found in a group. Those who follow this way find great benefit and blessing in group meetings.”

“The perfect mystic is not an ecstatic devotee lost in contemplation of Oneness, nor a saintly recluse shunning all commerce with mankind, but ‘the true saint’ goes in and out amongst the people and eats and sleeps with them and buys and sells in the market and marries and takes part in social intercourse, and never forgets God for a single moment.”

“First tie your camel’s knee and then trust in God.”

“Wear with mankind what they wear and eat what they eat. But be separate from them inwardly.”

“Solitude in the crowd: in all your outward activity remain inwardly free. Learn not to identify with anything whatsoever.”

“Opportunity is precious and time is a sword.”

“If all you have is a few copper coins in one pocket, those coins are of great value to you. But if someone places a thousand gold pieces in your other pocket, those few copper coins are no longer important.”

“To meet You I look at face after face, appearance after appearance... To see Your face I pass by like the morning wind.”

“Shibli sought Junayd as a teacher and said to him, ‘You are recommended as an expert on pearls (enlightenment and wisdom)... Either give me one, or sell one to me.’ ‘If I sell you one, you will not have the price of it, and if I give you one, having so easily come by it you will not realize its value,’ Junayd replied. ‘Do like me; plunge head-first into this Sea, and if you wait patiently you will obtain your pearl.’ ”

“Search, no matter what situation you are in.
O thirsty one, search for water constantly.
Finally, the time will come when you will reach the spring.”

“It is a grave error for anyone to imagine he will attain anything or that anything will be revealed to him of the Path without persistent striving on his part.”

“The thing we tell of can never be found by seeking, yet only seekers find it.”

"Whoever believes he can reach God by his own efforts toils in vain; whoever believes he can reach God without effort is merely a traveller on the road of intent."

"When you think you have found Him, that very instant you have lost Him. And when you think you have lost Him, then you have found Him."

"And if He closes before you all the ways and passes,
He will show you a hidden way which nobody knows."

"Keep strenuously toiling along this path,
Do not rest until the last breath; for
That last breath may bring the blessings
from the Knower of all things."

"No one learned the art of archery from Me
Who did not make Me, in the end, the target."

"Like the hunter, the Sufi chases game; he sees the tracks left by the musk deer and follows them.
For a while it is the tracks which are his clues, but later it is the musk itself which guides him."

"A path and a gateway have no meaning once the objective is in sight."

"Everything in the world of existence has an end and a goal. The end is maturity and the goal is freedom. For example, fruit grows on the tree until it is ripe and then falls. The ripened fruit represents maturity, and the fallen fruit, freedom."

The final goal is returning to one's origin. Everything which reaches its origin has reached its goal. A farmer sows grain in the ground and tends it. It begins to grow, eventually seeds, and again becomes grain. It has returned to its original form. The circle is complete. Completing the circle of existence is freedom."

"The inner pilgrim wraps himself in the light of the holy spirit, transforming his material shape into the inner essence, and circumambulating the shrine of the heart, inwardly recites the name of God. He moves in circles because the path of the essence is not straight but circular. Its end is its beginning."

"Dhu-I-Nun was asked, 'What is the end of the mystic?' He answered, 'When he is as he was where he was before he was.'"

3. The Teacher and the Disciple

The Sufis say that you need a teacher as a guide on the mystical path. The teacher is someone who is surrendered to God and is able to help the wayfarer make the transition from ego to Self. In surrendering to the teacher, the disciple learns to surrender to God.

"In the beginning you must do two things. One is journeying and the other is you must take a master."

"Choose a master, for without him this journey is full of tribulations, fears, and dangers. With no escort, you would be lost on a road you would have already taken. Do not travel alone on the Path."

"It is easier to drag along a mountain by a hair than to emerge from the self by oneself."

"Do not take a step
On the path of love without a guide.
I have tried it
One hundred times and failed."

"Abu Said was asked, 'If someone wishes, is it possible to travel the mystic path without a teacher?' the Sheikh replied, 'It is impossible because someone is required to guide him along the way, someone who has already reached the goal travelling that path, who will tell him what are faults and what are virtues on this path. At each stage he will say this is the such-and-such stage, here one must remain a little longer. And if there is a dangerous place somewhere, he will tell him to be on his guard, and will give him kindly encouragement, so that travelling that path with a strengthened heart, he may reach the goal. When he has reached the goal he will find peace.'"

"Whoever travels without a guide needs two hundred years for a two-days' journey."

"The moment you are united with the master, it becomes effortless."

"Then there arises the question of how to find the real guru. Very often people are in doubt, they do not know whether the guru they see is a true or false guru. Frequently a person comes in contact with a false guru in a world where there is so much falsehood. But at the same time a real seeker, one who is not false to himself, will always meet with the truth, with the real, because it is his own real faith, his own sincerity in earnest seeking that will become his torch. The real teacher is within, the lover of reality is one's own sincere self, and if one is really seeking truth, sooner or later one will certainly find a true teacher. And supposing one came into contact with a false teacher, what then? Then the real

One will turn the false teacher into a real teacher, because Reality is greater than falsehood.”

“People think that a Sheikh should show miracles and manifest illumination. The requirement of a teacher, however, is only that he should possess all that the disciple needs.”

“Abu Said was asked, ‘Who is the spiritual guide who has attained to Truth, and who is the sincere disciple?’

The Sheikh replied, “The spiritual guide who attained to Truth is he in whom at least ten characteristics are found, as proof of his authenticity:

First, he must have become a goal, to be able to have a disciple.

Second, he must have travelled the mystic path himself, to be able to show the way.

Third, he must have become refined and educated, to be able to be an educator.

Fourth, he must be generous and devoid of self-importance, so that he can sacrifice wealth on behalf of the disciple.

Fifth, he must have no hand in the disciple’s wealth, so that he is not tempted to use it for himself.

Sixth, whenever he can give advice through a sign, he will not use direct expression.

Seventh, whenever he can educate through kindness, he will not use violence and harshness.

Eighth, whatever he orders, he has first accomplished himself.

Ninth, whatever he forbids the disciple, he has abstained from himself.

Tenth, he will not abandon for the world’s sake the disciple he accepts for the sake of God.

If the spiritual guide is like this and is adorned with these character traits, the disciple is bound to be sincere and a good traveller, for what appears in the disciple is the quality of the spiritual guide made manifest in the disciple.’

As for the sincere disciple, the Sheikh said, ‘No less than the ten characteristics which I mention must be present in the sincere disciple, if he is to be worthy of discipleship:

First, he must be intelligent enough to understand the spiritual guide’s indications.

Second, he must be obedient in order to carry out the spiritual guide’s command.

Third, he must be sharp of hearing to perceive what the spiritual guide says.

Fourth, he must have an enlightened heart in order to see the spiritual guide’s greatness.

Fifth, he must be truthful, so that whatever he reports, he reports truthfully.

Sixth, he must be true to his word, so that whatever he says, he keeps his promise.

Seventh, he must be generous, so that whatever he has, he is able to give away.

Eighth, he must be discreet, so that he can keep a secret.

Ninth, he must be receptive to advice, so that he will accept the guide’s admonition.

Tenth, he must be chivalrous in order to sacrifice his own dear life on the mystic path.

Having these character traits, the disciple will more easily accomplish his journey and more quickly reach the goal set for him on the mystic path by the spiritual guide.' ”

“It should be borne in mind that the function of the disciple is to focus a stream of energy of some special kind upon the physical plane where it can become an attractive center of force and draw to itself similar types of ideas and thought currents, which are not strong enough to live by themselves or to make a sufficiently strong impact upon human consciousness.”

“Love cannot be more or less for the Teacher. For him the very beginning and the end are the same; it is a closed circle. His love for the disciple does not go on increasing; for the disciple, of course, it is very different; he has to complete the whole cycle... As the disciple progresses he feels the Master nearer and nearer, as the time goes on. But the Master is not nearer; he was always near, only the disciple did not know it.”

“God is nowhere. God can only be known through the Master. If you are being merged into the Teacher, you will know God. Only the Teacher is important for you. Only the Teacher. The Divine Master is complete in every way. By simply becoming like him one becomes complete in every way...”

“I am transcendent reality, and I am the tenuous thread that brings it very close. I am the secret of man in his very act of existing, and I am that invisible one who is the object of worship... I am the Sheikh with the divine nature, and I am the guardian of the world of human nature.”

“The spiritual master is to his community, what the prophet is to his nation.”

“Saints are like rivers, they flow where they are directed... If a Hint is there, I have to do it, and if I don't, I am *made* to do it. A Divine Hint is an Order. Sometimes the Saints have to do things the people will misjudge, and which from the worldly point of view could be condemned, because the world judges by appearances. One important quality required on the Path is never to judge by appearances. More often than not things look different from what they really are. There is no good and evil for the Creator. Only human society makes it so. A Saint is beyond good and evil, but Saints are people of the highest morality and will never give a bad example.”

“The saint is a fragrant plant placed in the earth by God. The truthful take in his fragrance and it comes into their hearts so that they long for their Master. Then they increase their worship according to their different natures.”

“The saints of God are known by three signs: their thought is of God, their dwelling is in God, and their business is with God.”

"O you who stab the selfless one with the sword, you are
stabbing yourself with it. Beware!
For the selfless one has passed away, he has become a
mirror:
naught is there but the image of another's face.
If you spit at it, you spit at your own face; and if you
strike the mirror,
you strike yourself.
And if you see an ugly face in the mirror, 'tis you;
and if you see Jesus and Mary, 'tis you.
He is neither this nor that: he is pure and free from self;
he puts your image before you."

"The Teacher is without a face and without a name."

"Last night my teacher taught me the lesson of Poverty:
Having nothing and wanting nothing."

"We are the means of reaching the goal. It is necessary that seekers should cut
themselves away from us and think only of the goal."

"The only guide to God is God Himself."

4. The Longing of the Heart

*The heart's longing for God is the pain of separation. This primal cry of the soul
draws the lover back to the arms of the Beloved.*

"Listen to the reed how it tells a tale,
complaining of separations,
Saying, 'Ever since I was parted from the reed-bed,
my lament has caused man and woman to moan.
It is only to a bosom torn by severance that I can unfold
the pain of love-desire.
Everyone who is left far from his source wishes back
the time when was united with it.' "

"The source of my grief and my loneliness is deep in my breast.
This is a disease no doctor can cure.
Only union with the Friend can cure it."

"I will cry to Thee and cry to Thee and cry to Thee
Until the milk of Thy kindness boils up."

"If the eight Paradises were opened in my hut, and the rule of both worlds were given in my hands, I would not give for them that single sigh which rises at morning-time from the depth of my soul in remembering my longing for Him."

"Oh Lord, nourish me not with love but with the desire for love."

"Give me the pain of Love, the Pain of Love for Thee!
Not the joy of Love, just the Pain of Love,
And I will pay the price, any price you ask!
All myself I will offer for it, and the price you will ask on top of it!
Keep the joy for others, give me the Pain,
And gladly will I pay for the Pain of Love!"

"Longing is a state of commotion in the heart hoping for meeting with the Beloved. The depth of longing is commensurate with the servant's love of God."

"The world is full of beautiful things until an old man with a beard came into my life and set my heart aflame with longing and made it pregnant with love. How can I look at the loveliness around me, how can I see it, if it hides the face of my Lover?"

"A sweet smell has the dust at the feet of my Guru; never I cried before, but now there is no end of sorrow for me..."

"If God, when He created the world, had created no creatures in it; and if He had filled it full of millet from East to West and from earth to heaven; and if then He had created one bird and bidden it eat one grain of this millet every thousand years, and if, after that, He had created a man and kindled in his heart this mystic longing and had told him that he would never win to this goal until this bird left not a single millet-seed in the whole world, and that he would continue until then in this burning pain of love – I have been thinking, it would still be a thing too soon ended!"

"The inner truth of desire is that it is a restive motion in the heart in search of God."

"There are those among you who desire this world and there are those among you who desire the world to come. But where is he who desires God?"

"I am calling you from afar;
Calling to you since the very beginning of days.
Calling to you across millennia,
For aeons of time –
Calling – calling... Since always...
It is part of your being, my voice,
But it comes to you faintly and you only hear it sometimes;
'I don't know', you may say.
But somewhere you know.
'I can't hear', you say, 'what is it and where?'

But somewhere you hear, and deep down you know.
For I am that in you which has been always.
I am that in you which will never end.
Even if you say, 'Who is calling?'
Even if you think, 'Who is that?'
Where will you run? Just tell me.
Can you run away from yourself?

For I am the Only One for you;
There is no other,
Your Promise, your Reward am I alone –
Your Punishment, your longing
And your Goal..."

"Someone asked Rabia, 'I have committed many sins; if I turn in penitence towards God, will He turn in mercy towards me?' – 'Nay', she replied, 'but if He shall turn towards thee, thou wilt turn towards Him.' "

"Until the beam of His love shines out to guide the soul,
It does not set out to behold the love of His Face.
My heart feels not the slightest attraction towards Him
Until an attraction comes from Him and works upon my heart.
Since I learnt that He longs for me, longing for Him never leaves me for an instant."

"If the magnet were not loving, how could it attract the iron with such longing?
And if love were not there, the straw would not seek the amber."

"Not only the thirsty seek the water,
The water as well seeks the thirsty."

"Spiritual need is a living and luminous fire placed by God in the breasts of His servants that their 'self' may be burned; and when it has been burned this fire becomes the fire of 'longing' which never dies, neither in this world nor in the next."

"One must have 'spiritual need', for there is no shorter way to God for the devotee; if it passes through solid rock, water springs forth. 'Spiritual need' is fundamental for the Sufis; it is the bestowal of God's mercy upon them."

"You'll be free from the trap of your being,
When, through spiritual need,
You're trodden underfoot, like a mat,
In the mosque and the winehouse."

"Ecstasy is a flame which springs up in the secret heart, and appears out of longing."

"Open your hidden eyes and return to the root of the root of your own self."

“When it is possible to hear the Beloved speak Himself, why listen to second-hand reports?”

“Know that you are the veil which conceals yourself from you. Know also that you cannot reach God through yourself, but that you reach Him through Him. The reason is that when God vouchsafes the vision of reaching Him, He calls upon you to seek after Him and you do.”

“It is He who suffers His absence in me
Who through me cries out to Himself.
Love’s most strange, most holy mystery –
We are intimate beyond belief.”

5. Remembrance

The Sufi aspires to remember God every moment of the day, with each and every breath. The repetition of the name of God is the fundamental practice of remembrance.

“There is a polish for everything that taketh away rust;
and the polish of the heart is the invocation of Allah.”

“Say ‘Allah!’ then leave them to amuse themselves in their folly.”

“Remembrance makes people desire the journey:
it makes them into travellers.”

“Of all spiritual practices... the *dhikr* is the practice most apt to free spiritual energy... The advantage of the *dhikr* is that it is not restricted to any ritual hour; its only limitation is the personal capacity of the ‘student’.”

“The breath that does not repeat the name of God is a wasted breath.”

“All the hundred-and-twenty-four-thousand prophets were sent to preach one word. They bade the people say ‘Allah!’ and devote themselves to Him. Those who heard this word with the ear alone, let it go out by the other ear; but those who heard it with their souls, imprinted it on their souls and repeated it until it penetrated their hearts and souls, and their whole being became this word. They were made independent of the pronunciation of the word, they were released from the sound and the letters. Having understood the spiritual meaning of this word, they became so absorbed in it that they were no more conscious of their own non-existence.”

"Truth has been planted in the center of the heart as Allah's trust, entrusted to you for safekeeping. It becomes manifest with true repentance and with true efforts. Its beauty shines on the surface when one remembers God and does the *dhikr*. At the first stage one recites the name of God with one's tongue; then when the heart becomes alive one recites inwardly with the heart."

"Sahl said to one of his disciples: 'Try to say continuously for one day: *Allah! Allah! Allah!* and do the same the next day and the day after, until it becomes a habit.' Then he told him to repeat it at night also, until it became so familiar that the disciple repeated it even during his sleep. Then Sahl said, 'Do not consciously repeat the Name any more, but let your whole faculties be engrossed in remembering Him!' The disciple did this until he became absorbed in the thought of God. One day, a piece of wood fell on his head and broke it. The drops of blood that dripped to the ground bore the legend, *Allah! Allah! Allah!*"

"A devotee was praying when Satan appeared to him and said:
'How long wilt thou cry *Oh Allah?* Be quiet for thou wilt get no answer.
The devotee hung his head in silence. After a while he had a vision of the prophet Khidr, who said to him, 'Ah, why hast thou ceased to call on God?'
'Because the answer *Here I am*, came not', he replied.
Khidr said, 'God hath ordered me to go to thee and say this:
Was it not I that summoned thee to My service?
Did I not make thee busy with My name?
Thy calling *Allah!* was My *Here I am*,
Thy yearning pain My messenger to thee.
Of all those tears and cries and supplications
I was the magnet, and I gave them wings.' "

"I call to You... No, it is You who calls me to Yourself.
How could I say, 'It is You!' if you had not said to me, 'It is I?'"

"I am the companion of him who remembers Me."

"Whoever recollects God in reality, forgets all else beside Him, because all the creatures recollect Him, as is witnessed by those who experience a revelation. I experienced this state from evening prayer until one third of the night was over, and I heard the voices of the creatures in the praise of God, with elevated voices so that I feared for my mind. I heard the fishes who said, 'Praised be the King, the Most Holy, the Lord.' "

"Recollection is forgetting everything besides Him."

"God Most High hath said, 'I give more to the one who is so occupied with My remembrance that he does not ask things of Me, than I give to the supplicants.' "

"Keep God, the Beloved, always in your heart. Let your prayer, *dhikr*, be the prayer of your heart."

“There are different levels of remembrance and each has different ways. Some are expressed outwardly with audible voice, some felt inwardly, silently, from the center of the heart. At the beginning one should declare in words what one remembers. Then stage by stage the remembrance spreads throughout one’s being – descending to the heart then rising to the soul; then still further it reaches the realm of the secrets; further to the hidden; to the most hidden of the hidden. How far the remembrance penetrates, the level it reaches, depends solely on the extent to which Allah in His bounty has guided one.”

“*Dhikr* is, in its reality, the progressive power of the Named on the heart, while the *dhikr* itself wears away and disappears.”

“I make abundant remembrance of You not because I have forgotten You; That is simply what flows from the tongue.”

“Not a day passes but that the Exalted cries out, ‘O my servant, you treat Me unjustly. I remember you, but You forget Me. I invite you to Myself, but you go to others.’ ”

“One cannot taste the intimacy of remembrance without having suffered the desolation of forgetfulness.”

“There is a punishment for all things. The punishment for the mystic is to be cut off from his remembrance.”

“When God wishes to befriend one of His servants, He opens for him the gate of His remembrance. When he experiences the sweetness of remembrance, He opens for him the gate of nearness. Then He raises him into the gatherings of His intimacy. Then He settles him upon the throne of unity. Then He lifts the veil from him and leads him into the abode of unicity and reveals for him the divine splendor and majesty. When his eyes fall upon the divine splendor and majesty, naught of himself remains. Thereupon His servant is entirely extinguished for a time. After this he comes under God’s exalted protection, free from any pretensions of his self.”

6. Meditation and Prayer

Meditation and prayer allow for the intimate communion of lover and Beloved and the inner experience of love's oneness.

"Before He created them, He praised them;
before they glorify Him, he gave them thanks."

"With the mountains, with the stone
Will I call Thee, o Lord!
With the birds in the early dawn
Will I call Thee, o Lord!

With the fishes in the sea,
With gazelles in deserts free,
With the mystic's call 'O He!'
Will I call thee, Lord, o Lord!"

"O God! if I worship Thee in fear of Hell, burn me in Hell;
and if I worship Thee in hope of Paradise, exclude me from Paradise;
but if I worship Thee for Thine own sake, withhold not Thine everlasting beauty."

"You know that I am powerless to offer You a fitting thanksgiving. Then come into me and give Yourself thanks. This is the true prayer of thanksgiving! There is no other!"

"And if I send Thee greetings, Thou art the greeting,
And if I speak, Thou art the prayer."

"The eyes which regard God are also the eyes through which He regards the world."

" 'God is simple and loves simplicity', which is to say, 'Solitary, God loves only the solitary – One, He loves only him who witnesses Him as One.' "

"O my Lord, whatever share of this world Thou dost bestow on me, bestow it on Thine enemies, and whatever share of the next world Thou dost give to me, give it to Thy friends – Thou art enough for me."

"What predominates in the heart of the mystic while he is at prayer is a sense of the mystery of Him in Whose Presence he stands and the might of Him Whom he seeks and the love of Him Who favors him with familiar intercourse with Himself, and he is conscious of that until he has finished praying and he departs with a face so changed that his friends would not recognize him, because of the awe that he feels at the Majesty of God."

"O God, the night has passed and the day has dawned. How I long to know if Thou hast accepted my prayers or if Thou hast rejected them. Therefore console me for it is Thine to console this state of mine. Thou hast given me life and cared for me and Thine is the glory. If Thou wantst to drive me from Thy door, yet I would not forsake it, for the love that I bear in my heart towards Thee."

"How is it that those people are most beautiful who pray at night? – Because they are alone with the All-Merciful who covers them with light from His light."

"Worship God in such a way that you see Him. If you cannot do so be aware that He sees you."

"Become silent and go by the way of silence towards non-existence. And when you become non-existent you will be all praise and all laud."

"There are two types of silence: outer silence and silence of the heart and mind. The heart of one who trusts completely in God is silent, not demanding any means for living."

"God is silence and is most easily reached in silence."

"Silence for the ordinary people is with their tongues, silence for the mystics is with their hearts, and silence for lovers is with restraining the stray thoughts that come to their innermost beings."

"All this talk and turmoil and noise and movement is outside the veil; Inside the veil is silence and calm and peace."

"The wise have inherited wisdom by means of silence and contemplation."

"Meditation is the chief possession of the mystic, that whereby the sincere and the God-fearing make progress on the journey to God."

"I went to see Nuri. I saw him sitting in meditation so motionless that not even one hair moved.

I asked, 'From whom did you learn such deep meditation?'

'I learned it from a cat waiting by a mouse hole. The cat was much stiller than I am.' "

"Bayezid Bistami, sitting at the feet of his teacher, was suddenly told, 'Bayezid, fetch me that book from the window.'

'The window? Which window?' asked Bayezid.

'Why', said the master, 'you have been coming here all this time and did not see the window?'

'No', replied Bayezid, 'What have I to do with the window? When I am before you I close my eyes to everything else. I have not come to stare about.'

'Since that is so', said the teacher, 'go back to Bestam. Your work is completed.' "

“The best act of worship is watchfulness of the moments. That is, that the servant not look beyond his limit, and not contemplate anything other than his Lord, and not associate with anything other than his present moment.”

“There was a ruler who had a servant for whom he cared more than his other servants; none of them was more valuable or more handsome than this one. The ruler was asked about this, so he wanted to make clear to them the superiority of this servant over others in service. One day he was riding with his entourage. In the distance was a snow-capped mountain. The ruler looked at that snow and bowed his head. The servant galloped off on his horse. The people did not know why he galloped off. In a short time he came back with some snow, and the ruler asked him, ‘How did you know I wanted snow?’

The servant replied, ‘Because you looked at it, and the look of the sultan comes only with firm intention.’

So the ruler said, ‘I accord him special favor and honor, because for every person there is an occupation, and his occupation is observing my glances and watching my states of being attentively.’ ”

“The best prayer is the one kindled by sorrow.”

“God Most High hath brought forth creation, and said, ‘Entrust Me with your secrets. If you do not do this, then look towards Me. If you do not do this, then listen to Me. If you do not do this, then wait at My door. If you do none of this, at least tell me your needs.’ ”

“When a servant whom God loves prays to Him, God says, ‘O Gabriel, delay answering the need of My servant, for I love to hear his voice.’

When a servant whom God dislikes prays to Him, God says, ‘O Gabriel, answer my servant’s needs, for I dislike hearing his voice.’ ”

“Salih al-Murri said, ‘Whoever is persistent in knocking at the door is on the verge of having it opened for him.’

Rabia asked him, ‘How long are you going to say this? When was the door closed so that one had to ask to have it opened?’ ”

“The Children of Israel kept asking Moses: ‘Does God pray?’ Moses kept quiet and did not answer. They urged him again and again. Finally God said to Moses, ‘You are My messenger; through you I communicate with My people. Tell them: God prays, and His prayer is, *May My Mercy precede My Anger.*’ ”

7. Suffering and Surrender

Suffering is the pain of purification, cleansing the heart of imperfections. Through suffering, the lover learns to surrender to the Beloved and become His slave.

"The self will not go in gladness and with caresses.
It must be chased with sorrow, drowned in tears."

"Suffering is Himself, while good fortune comes from Him."

"When does gold ore become gold? When it is put through a process of fire. So the human being during the training becomes as pure as gold through suffering. It is the burning away of the dross. Suffering has a great redeeming quality. As a drop of water falling on the desert sand is sucked up immediately, so we must become nothing and nowhere... we must disappear."

"When God becomes friends with a man, He grants him much distress and when He makes him His enemy, He provides worldly goods in abundance."

"O God! whatever punishment Thou mayst inflict upon me, do not punish me with the humiliation of being veiled from Thee."

"You imagined that you would accomplish this task through your own strength, activity, and effort. This is the wont that I have established: expend everything you have in Our way. Then Our bounty will come to you. On this endless road, We command you to travel with your own feeble hands and feet. We know that you cannot traverse this way with feet so feeble. Indeed, in a hundred thousand years you will not arrive at the first way station. However when you travel this road until your legs are exhausted and you fall down flat, until you have no more strength to move forward, then God's grace will take you in its arms."

"Sorrow and joy are your own attributes, and whatever is your attribute is created, and the created has no access to the non-created."

"A Bedouin was asked, 'Do you acknowledge the Lord?'
He replied, 'How could I not acknowledge Him who has sent me hunger, made me naked and impoverished, and caused me to wander from country to country?'
As he spoke thus, he entered a state of ecstasy."

"Do not chastise me for my devastation.
For the guide of love
Decreed the tavern of ruin for me
On the very first day."

"God does not charge a soul with more than it can bear."

"I am with those whose hearts are broken for my sake."

"Wherever there is a ruin, there is hope for treasure – why do you not seek the treasure of God in the wasted heart?"

"The pain of love became the medicine for every heart,
The difficulty could never be solved without love."

"Sweeter than this poison I did not see any drink,
Lovelier than this illness I did not see any health."

"I burnt, and burnt and burnt."

"Pain and happiness have the same shape in this world:
You may call the rose an open heart, or a broken heart."

"Someone asked Junayd: 'Slave of God who yet are free, tell me how to reach a state of contentment.' Junayd replied: 'When one has learned through love to accept.' "

"When you die of surrender, only then you will live forever.
If you are put to death through surrender,
There is no such thing as death for you,
For you have died already."

"I offer to Thee the only thing I have,
My capacity of being filled with Thee."

"Surrender is the most difficult thing in the world while you are doing it and the easiest when it is done."

"One builds the self only with his full-accepted destiny."

"I want union with Him and He wants separation;
thus I leave what I want so that His wish comes true."

"Servitude is that you be His slave every instant, just as He is your Lord every instant."

"Do you think I know what I'm doing?
That for one breath or half a breath
I belong to myself?

As much as a pen knows what it's writing,
or the ball can guess where it's going next."

"I do not ask to see,
I do not ask to know,
I ask only to be used."

"Sacrifice the self, otherwise don't be occupied with the foolish talk of the Sufis."

8. Polishing the Heart

Sufis describe the heart as a mirror which the wayfarer polishes and polishes with aspiration and inner work, until no imperfection remains. Then the mirror of the heart can reflect the true light of the Beloved.

“By means of the Divine Lights the heart becomes polished so that it shines like a polished mirror. When it becomes a mirror one can see in it the reflection of all existing things and the reflection of the Kingdom of God *as they really are*.”

“Whether your lot be glory or disgrace, be pure of both hatred and love of self. Polish your mirror, and perhaps that sublime beauty from the regions of mystery will shine in your breast – just as it did for the prophets. And then with your heart illuminated by that splendor, the secret of the Beloved will no longer be concealed from you.”

“For twelve years, I was the blacksmith of my soul. I thrust my soul into the furnace of discipline and made it hot in the flames of arduous endeavor, then I placed it upon the anvil of reproach and hammered it with the hammer of self-blame, till I had fashioned out of my soul a mirror. For five years I was my own mirror, and I polished that mirror with every manner of godly service and obedience. After that I gazed upon my own reflection for a year and I saw about my waist an infidel girdle of delusion and coquetry and self-regard, because I relied upon my own acts of obedience and approved of my own conduct.”

“One has to work day and night,
to plough and to clean the field of the soul.”

“If you find the mirror of the heart dull,
the rust has not been cleared from its face.”

“Struggle with all alien thoughts, be always mindful of what you are doing and thinking. So that you may put the imprint of your immortality on every passing incident in your daily life.”

“Purity of the heart is to will one thing.”

“Sometimes He shows Himself in one way
Sometimes in the opposite way – the work
of religion is naught but bewilderment.”

“The Oneness of God, which is professed by the Sufis, consists of: separating the created from the non-created, going forth from one’s native land, rejecting attachments, and putting aside what one knows and what one does not know, so that in place of all this there is the Real.”

"I had hoped to get instructions in Yoga, expected wonderful teachings, but what the Teacher did was mainly to force me to face the darkness within myself, and it almost killed me. In other words, he made me 'descend into hell', the cosmic drama enacted in every soul as soon as it dares lift its face to the Light."

"When Majduddun Baghdadi entered the service of a sheikh, he was made to serve 'at the place of ablution', i.e., to clean the latrines. His mother, a well-to-do lady physician, asked the master to exempt the tender boy from his work, and sent him twelve Turkish slaves to do the cleaning. But he replied, 'You are a physician – if your son had an inflammation of the gall bladder, should I give the medicine to a Turkish slave instead of him?' "

"Almighty God admitted me to His presence in two thousand stations, and in every station He offered me a kingdom, but I declined it. God said to me, 'Bayezid, what do you desire?' I replied, 'I desire not to desire'."

"For thirty years I sat watching over my heart. Then for ten years my heart watched over me. Now it is twenty years that I know nothing of my heart and my heart knows nothing of me."

"Strive to become the true human being:
one who knows love, one who knows pain.
Be full, be humble, be utterly silent,
be the bowl of wine passed from hand to hand."

"The meaning of noble character is that the harshness of men does not affect you once you have become attentive to God."

"If someone remarks, 'What an excellent man you are!' and this pleases you more than his saying, 'What a bad man you are!' know that you are still a bad man."

"Only that which cannot be lost in a shipwreck is yours."

"I will not serve God like a laborer, in expectation of my wages."

"All wisdom can be stated in two lines:
What's done for you – allow it to be done.
What you must do yourself – make sure you do it."

"Do to me what is worthy of Thee,
And not what is worthy of me."

"Now the Lord is with them in every alteration,
Performing an unimaginable work in them hour after hour.
If they only knew! they would not withdraw from Him,
not even for the space of a wink.
For He does not withdraw from them at any time..."

"I met one of the young seekers in the desert under an acacia tree and asked him what made him sit there. He replied, 'I am looking for something.' Then I passed on and left him where he was. When I returned from the pilgrimage, I found he had moved to a spot closer to the tree. I asked, 'Why are you sitting here?' He answered, 'I found what I had been looking for in this place, so I stuck to it.' I do not know which was more noble, his persistence in seeking his state or his perseverance in staying at the place where he attained his desire."

9. Light upon Light

Sufis have given many mystical interpretations to passages in the Quran. One of the most familiar and yet enigmatic Quranic verses is the "verse of Light" (35) from Sura 24. Sufis have understood the inner meaning of this verse as a metaphor for the human heart, in which God's light resides and by which man is guided on his mystical journey.

“God is the Light of the heavens and the earth,
His light may be compared to a niche
wherein is a lamp
the lamp in a glass
the glass as it were a glittering star
kindled from a Blessed tree
an olive that is neither of the East nor of the West
whose oil would almost shine forth
though no fire touches it.
Light upon light
God guides to His light whom He will.
God speaks in metaphors to me.
God has knowledge of all things.”

“God placed within the heart of knowledge of Him, and so the heart became lit by God's Light. By this light He gave the heart eyes to see. Then God spoke in a parable and said, 'Compared to a niche wherein is a lamp'. The lamp of the Divine Light is in the hearts of those who believe in the Oneness of God.”

“There are lights which ascend and lights which descend. The ascending lights are the lights of the heart; the descending lights are those of the Throne. The lower-self is the veil between the Throne and the heart. When this veil is rent and a door opens in the heart, like springs towards like. Light rises toward light and light comes down upon light, 'and it is light upon light'.

Each time the heart sighs for the Throne, the Throne sighs for the heart, so they come to meet... Each time a light rises up from you, a light comes down towards you, and each time a flame rises from you a corresponding flame comes down towards you... If their energies are equal, they meet half-way... But when the

substance of light has grown in you, then this becomes a Whole in relation to what is of the same nature in Heaven: then it is the substance of light in Heaven which yearns for you and is attracted to your light, and it descends towards you. This is the secret of the mystical journey..."

"Sorrow for his sake is a treasure in my heart. My heart is *light upon light*, a beautiful Mary with Jesus in the womb."

"True ecstasy is the conjunction of light with light, when the soul of man meets the Divine Light."

"The heart is the king and the limbs are its servants; each limb junctions according to the will and command of the heart, yet the will of the heart comes from God. God nominates no one over the heart but Himself, and no one can see what the heart contains. God alone places in the heart and removes from the heart whatever He wills... The heart is source and abode of God's Unity and object of God's observation... God observes over the hearts for they are the containers of His most precious jewels and treasure stores of the true knowledge of Him."

"Dear friend, your heart is a polished mirror. You must wipe it clean of the veil of dust which has gathered upon it, because it is destined to reflect the light of the divine secrets. When the light from *Allah Who is the light of the heavens and the earth* begins to shine upon the regions of your heart, the lamp of the heart will be lit. The lamp of the heart is in a glass, the glass as it were a brightly shining star... Then within that heart, the lightning-shaft of divine revelation strikes. The lightning-shaft will emanate from the thunderclouds of meaning neither of the East nor of the West, lit from a blessed olive tree. It will throw light upon the tree of discovery, so pure, so transparent that it sheds light though fire does not touch it. Then the lamp of wisdom is lit by itself. How can it remain unlit when the light of Allah's secrets shine over it?

It is not the stars that guide us but the divine light... If only the lamp of divine secrets be kindled in your inner self the rest will come, either all at once or little by little... the dark skies of unconsciousness will be lit by the divine presence and the peace and beauty of the full moon, which will rise from the horizon shedding light upon light, ever rising in the sky, passing through its appointed stages... until it shines in glory in the center of the sky, dispersing the darkness of heedlessness... Your night of unconsciousness will then see the brightness of the day... then you will see from the horizon of Divine Reason the sun of inner knowledge rising. It is your private sun, for you are the one whom Allah guides... finally, the knot will be untied... and the veils will lift and the shells will shatter, revealing the fine beneath the coarse; the truth will uncover her face. All this will begin when the mirror of your heart is cleansed. The light of Divine secrets will fall upon it if you are willing and ask for Him, from Him, with Him."

“By means of the Divine Lights the heart becomes polished so that it shines like a polished mirror. When it becomes a mirror one can see in it the reflection of all existing things and the reflection of the Kingdom of God as they really are. When one sees the Glory and Majesty of God in His Realm, then all the lights become one light and the chest becomes full with this shining light. He is like a man who observes his reflection in a mirror and sees in it at the same time the reflection of all that is before and behind him. Now when a ray of sun hits the mirror the whole house becomes flooded with light from the meeting of these two lights: the light of the sun-ray and the light of the mirror. Similarly the heart: when it is polished and shining it beholds the Realm of Divine Glory and the Divine Glory becomes revealed to it.”

“O Light of light, Thou art veiled to Thy creatures and they do not attain to Thy light. O Light of light, Thy light illuminates the people of heaven and enlightens the people of earth. O Light of all light, Thy light is praised by all light.”

10. The Lover and the Beloved

For the Sufi the relationship with God is that of lover and Beloved. The lover travels a path from the pain of separation to the bliss of union. Yet the Beloved for whom he longs is eternally present within the heart.

“He loves them and they love Him.”

“In the whole of the universe there are only two, the lover and the Beloved. God loves His creation and the soul loves God. In order to be able to create, the One Being had to become two, and logically there had to be a difference between the two... The creation was only possible because of the two opposites.”

“Man loves God, because of the affinity between the human soul and its Source, for it shares in the Divine nature and attributes, because through knowledge and love it can attain eternal life and itself become God-like.”

“God is necessary to us in order that we may exist, while we are necessary to Him in order that He may be manifested to Himself. I give Him also life by knowing Him in my heart.”

“Not a single lover would seek union
if the Beloved were not seeking it.”

“In memory of the Beloved we drank a wine that made us drunk before the creation of the vine.”

"O God, the stars are shining:
All eyes have closed in sleep;
The kings have locked their doors.
Each lover is alone, in secret, with the one he loves.
And I am here too: alone, hidden from all of them –
With You."

"To one whom God has placed in the rank of His lovers, He gives the vision of Himself, for He has sworn, saying, 'By My Glory, I will show him My Face and I will heal his soul by the Vision of Myself.'"

"I am nearer to you than yourself to yourself."

"A caliph had a cousin whom he loved dearly. One day they were both sitting beside a well. The caliph's ring fell into the well. The girl took her own off and threw it into the well. The caliph asked the girl, 'Why did you do a thing like that?' The girl replied, 'I have known parting. Since a state of union and intimacy exists between us, I didn't want your ring to know the anxieties of separation. I gave my ring to be its companion.' "

"Zuleika let everything be the name of Joseph,
from celery seed to aloes-wood. She loved him
so much, she concealed his name
in many different phrases, the inner meanings
known only to her.
When she said, *The wax is softening near the fire*,
she meant, My love is wanting me.
Or if she said, *Look the moon is up*, or
The willow has new leaves,
or *The branches are trembling*, or *The coriander seeds
have caught fire*, or *The roses are opening*,
or *The king is in a good mood today*, or *Isn't that lucky*,
or *The furniture needs dusting*, or
The water carrier is here, or *It's almost daylight*, or
These vegetables are perfect, or *The bread needs more salt*,
or *The clouds seem to be moving against the wind*,
or *My head hurts*, or *My headache's better*,
anything she praises, it's Joseph's touch she means,
any complaint, it's his being away.
When she's hungry, it's for him. Thirsty, his name
is a sherbet.
Cold, he's a fur. This is what the Friend can do
when one is in such love. Sensual people use the
holy names
often, but they don't work for them.
The miracle Jesus did by being the name of God,
Zuleika felt in the name of *Joseph*."

"If He hides His presence from you, it is because He is listening to you."

“My earth and My heaven containeth Me not, but the heart of My faithful servant containeth Me.”

“The love of God in its essence is really the illumination of the heart by joy because of its nearness to the Beloved, for love, in solitude, rises up triumphant and the heart of the lover is possessed by the sense of its fellowship with Him; and when solitude is combined with secret intercourse with the Beloved, the joy of that intercourse overwhelms the mind, so that it is no longer concerned with this world and what is therein.”

“Verily there are servants among my servants who love me, and I love them, and they long for Me, and I long for them and they look at Me, and I look at them... And their signs are that they preserve the shade at daytime as compassionately as a herdsman preserves his sheep, and they long for sunset as the bird longs for his nest at dusk, and when the night comes and the shadows become mixed and the beds are spread out and the bedsteads are put up and every lover is alone with his beloved, then they will stand on their feet and put their faces on the ground and will call Me with My word and will flatter Me with My graces, half crying and half weeping, half bewildered and half complaining, sometimes standing, sometimes sitting, sometimes kneeling, sometimes prostrating, and I see what they bear for My sake and I hear what they complain from My love.”

“The goblet of love is the lover’s heart, not his reason or his sense perception. For the heart fluctuates from state to state, just as God – who is the Beloved – is *each day upon some task*. So the lover undergoes constant variation of the Beloved in His acts... Love has many diverse and mutually opposed properties. Hence nothing receives these properties except that which has the capacity to fluctuate along with love. This belongs only to the heart.”

“Al-Junayd was asked, ‘What makes the lover weep when he meets the Beloved?’ He answered, ‘This is only because of his great joy over Him and because of the ecstasy born of his great longing for Him. I have heard the story of two brothers who embraced after a long separation. One of them cried, ‘Ah, what longing!’ The other responded, ‘Ah, what ecstasy.’ ”

“Real love does not diminish by the cruelty of the Beloved, nor does it grow by His grace, but is always the same.”

“Verily, Almighty God has a wine for His friends, such that when they drink of it, they become intoxicated, and once they are intoxicated they become merry, and once they are merry, they become purged, and once they are purged they become melted down, and once they are melted down, they become purified, and once they become purified they arrive, and once they arrive they become united with the Divine, and once they are united with the Divine there is no distinction between them and their Beloved.”

“The being of the lover and Beloved are the same.”

"Between the lover and the Beloved there must be no veil. Thou thyself art thine own veil, Hafiz – get out of the way!"

"The servant's love for God is a state too subtle for words. This state brings him to glorify God and to try to gain His pleasure. He has little patience in separation from Him, feels an urgent longing for Him, finds no comfort in anything other than Him, and experiences intimacy in his heart by making continual remembrance of Him. The servant's love for God does not imply affection or enjoyment in the human sense. Describing the lover as annihilated in the Beloved is more fitting than describing him as having enjoyment of Him."

"It is enough for the lover that he should make the One single."

"I came out from Bayezidness as a snake from its skin. Then I looked. I saw that lover, Beloved, and love are one because in that state of unification all can be done."

"Love means that the attributes of the lover are changed into those of the Beloved."

"The true lover finds the light only if, like the candle, he is his own fuel, consuming himself."

"Not until *two* has been erased,
Will lover enjoy Union with the Beloved."

"Everything is the Beloved, and the lover is a veil,
Living is the Beloved, and the lover is dead."

"Dhu-l-Nun met a woman on the seashore who revealed to him the mysteries of the path. He asked her, 'What is the end of love?' She answered, 'O simpleton, love has no end.' He asked, 'Why?' 'Because the Beloved has no end.' "

11. The Valley of Love

The power of love takes the Sufi wayfarer beyond the mind and the ego into the arena of the heart. Love is the fire that burns and transforms the lover, causing both bewilderment and intoxication, freeing the lover from everything but God.

“In this valley, love is represented by fire, and reason by smoke. When love comes, reason disappears. Reason cannot live with the folly of love; love has nothing to do with human reason. If you possessed inner sight, the atoms of the visible world would be manifested to you. But if you look at things with the eye of ordinary reason you will never understand how necessary it is to love. Only a man who has been tested and is free can feel this. He who understands this journey should have a thousand hearts so that he can sacrifice one at every moment.”

“I tell you the ways of love! Even though the head itself must be given, why should you weep over it?”

“In every moment this love is more endless,
in every time people are more bewildered in it.”

“The heart alone knows what the substance of love is,
the eye of reason has no power to behold it.”

“Love is a sweetness, but its inner reality is bewilderment.”

“I know nothing, I understand nothing, I am unaware of myself. I am in love, but with whom I do not know. My heart is at the same time both full and empty of love.”

“You may try a hundred things, but love alone will release you from yourself. So never flee from love – not even from love in an earthly guise – for it is a preparation for the supreme Truth.”

“Call me, and though Hell-fire lie between.
My love will make it easy to pass through the flames.”

“Sultan, saint, pickpocket,
love has everyone by the ear
dragging us to God by secret ways

I never knew
that God, too, desires us.”

"I planted a branch of desire for the people of love,
And not one knew, before me, what desire was.
It sprouted branches, and sensual longing ripened
And left me with a bitter taste from the sweet fruits.
The desire of all the passionate lovers,
If they were to trace it, comes from that source."

"Pure jewel! You have carried off my heart, without telling me either your name
or where you come from... I have neither my own heart nor my heart's desire."

"Oh who can cure my sickness? An outcast I have become. Family and home,
where are they? No path leads back to them and none to my beloved. Broken are
my name, my reputation, like glass smashed on a rock; broken is the drum which
once spread the good news and my ears now only hear the drumbeat of
separation. Huntress, beautiful one, whose victim I am – limping a willing target
for your arrows. I follow obediently my beloved, who owns my soul. If she says
'Get drunk', that is what I shall do. If she orders me to be mad, that is what I shall
be."

"Love is not to be learned from men; it is one of God's gifts and comes as a grace."

"Love is the pre-eternal wine drunk by the elect on the night of the Covenant."

"No one worships God by any act more pleasing to Him than that of loving Him."

"A thing can be explained only by what is more subtle than itself; there is nothing
subtler than love: by what then shall love be explained."

"It is burning of the heart I want; this burning which is everything,
More precious than a worldly empire, because it calls God secretly, in the night."

"The inner reality of love means that you give all of yourself to the One until
nothing remains of you for you."

"Love is a fire in the heart that burns up all but the Beloved's wishes."

"He who loves does not think about his own life; to love truly, a man must forget
about himself, be he ascetic or libertine. If your desires do not accord with your
spirit, sacrifice them, and you will come to the end of your journey. If the body of
desire obstructs the way, reject it; then fix your eyes in front and contemplate."

"I would love to kiss you.
And the price of this kissing is your life."

Now my love is running towards my life shouting,
What a bargain, let's buy it."

"Lovers do not reach the height of true love until one says to the other, 'O Thou
who art I.' "

“There is nothing good in love without death.”

“Love means tearing down the veils and exposing the secrets.”

“The final end of love is to become bare. As long as love is in the beginning stage of its journey, the lover’s nutriment is supplied by the form of the Beloved. However, once love reaches its final goal, it leaves behind every form. Just before this, the form of the Beloved appears in its perfection and falls as a hindrance between the lover and love. Thus the lover must spend all his effort to remove this veil.”

“Love means that all loves but love of the Beloved fall away from the heart.”

“The beginning of love is search
But the end is rest.”

12. Knowledge of God

A traditional Sufi saying states that “No one knows God but God”. But in the hearts of His lovers He reveals His Divine mysteries.

“True knowledge is what is unveiled in hearts.”

“Knowledge acquired by external means will never reveal the Truth.”

“God deposited within man knowledge of all things, then prevented him from perceiving what He had deposited within him... This is one of the divine mysteries which reason denies and considers totally impossible. The nearness of this mystery to those ignorant of it is like God’s nearness to His servant, as mentioned in His words, ‘We are nearer to him than you, but you do not see’, and His words, ‘We are nearer to him than his jugular vein’. In spite of this nearness, the person does not perceive and does not know... *no one knows what is within himself until it is unveiled to him instant by instant.*”

“To know God is to love Him.”

“If you would glimpse the beauty we revere
Look in your heart – its image will appear.
Make of your heart a looking-glass and see
Reflected there the Friend’s nobility.”

“Love leads to knowledge of the Divine mysteries and those who love abide in God and look to Him only, and He is nearer to them than all else and to them is given a vision of Him unveiled and they see Him with the eye of certainty. Gnosis, truly, is a light which God casts into the heart.”

"Insight consists of radiant lights in the heart, enabling mystics to carry secrets from one hidden realm to another, such that one may see things in the way that God displays them to him, so that he may speak about the innermost part of creation."

"The mystics are the treasure-houses of God: He deposits in them the knowledge of mysteries and information concerning wonderful things, and they speak of them with the tongue of eternity and interpret them with an interpretation which is everlasting."

"The ecstasy of the Sufis is the sudden encounter of the invisible with the invisible... These are the realities which they find within their innermost secret which emanates from the Divine Truth without explanation."

"True knowledge of God is gained when the lover comes in contact with the Beloved through secret communion with Him."

"He who tastes, knows."

"When God wishes to conquer a heart, He entrusts it with secrets, which the heart then perceives and proclaims."

"Man is My secret and I am his secret. The inner knowledge of the spiritual essence is a secret of My secrets. Only I put this into the heart of My good servant, and none may know his state other than Me."

"All that lies between the highest heaven and the earth does not amount to one atom compared with His power, and all existing knowledge cannot attain to one atom of the Lord's being."

"He praises me, and I praise Him, and He worships me and I worship Him.
How can He be independent
When I help Him and I assist Him?
In my knowing Him, I create Him."

"Who knows himself knows his Lord."

"In the ocean of life there is nothing more precious
than to know oneself.
We have, therefore, chosen to revolve around ourselves
like a whirlpool."

"There is nothing closer to you than yourself; if you don't know yourself, how will you know others? You might say, 'I know myself', but you are mistaken! ... The only thing you know about yourself is your physical appearance. The only thing you know about your *bâtin* (unconscious) is that when you are hungry you eat, when you are angry you fight, and when you are consumed with passion you make love. All animals are equal in this regard. You have to seek the truth within yourself... What are you? Where have you come from and where are you going?

What is your role in the world? Why have you been created? Where does your happiness lie? If you would like to know yourself, you should know that you are created by two things. One is your body and your outward appearance (*zâhir*) which you can see with your eyes. The other is your unconscious forces (*bâtin*). This is the part you cannot see but you can know with your insight. The truth of your existence is in your *bâtin*. Everything else is a servant to your *bâtin*."

"When you know yourself, your 'I-ness' vanishes and you know that you and God are one and the same."

"The final and ultimate return of the mystics... is that the Real is identical with them while they do not exist... The mystic is known only through the fact that he brings opposites together, for all of him is the Real. Thus Abu Said al-Kharratz was asked, 'Through what have you known Allah?' He replied, 'Through the fact that He brings opposites together', for he had witnessed their coming together in himself."

"Nothing sees God and dies, even as nothing sees God and lives, because His life is everlasting, and he who sees Him, remains in Him and is made everlasting."

"When Bayezid was asked how old he was, he replied, 'Four years'. They said, 'How can that be?' He answered, 'I have been veiled from God by this world for seventy years, but I have seen Him during the last four years: the period in which one is veiled does not belong to one's life.' "

"When the mystic's spiritual eye is opened, his physical eye is closed; he sees nothing but God."

"When the Beloved appears,
With what eye do I see Him?
With His eye, not with mine,
For none sees Him except Himself."

"One who sees with the light of insight sees with the light of God; the very substance of his knowledge comes from God."

"Whatever you imagine, God is the opposite of that."

"Praise to God who hath given His creatures no way of attaining to knowledge of Him except through their inability to know Him."

13. Wheresoever you Turn...

One of the central mystical experiences is the oneness of God, the realization of the inner truth that "everything is He".

"Wheresoever you turn, there is the face of Allah."

"There is no God but He, everything perishes except His Face."

"When the mystery – of realizing that the mystic is one with the Divine – is revealed to you, you will understand that you are no other than God and that you have continued and will continue... without when and without times. Then you will see all your actions to be His actions and all your attributes to be His attributes and your essence to be His essence, though you do not thereby become He or He you, in either the greatest or the least degree. 'Everything is perishing save His Face', that is, there is nothing except His Face, 'then, whithersoever you turn, there is the Face of God.' "

"Rose and mirror and sun and moon – where are they?
Wherever we looked, there was always Thy face."

"Whether one is inclined to evil or good,
Whether one is an inmate of a cloister or a monk in a monastery
From the point of view of 'form', everyone is other than He
But from the point of view of reality everything is He and none other than He!"

"And in everything there is a witness for Him
that points to the fact that He is One."

"In the market, in the cloister – only God I saw.
In the valley and on the mountain – only God I saw.
Him I have seen beside me oft in tribulation;
In favor and in fortune – only God I saw.
In prayer and in fasting, in praise and contemplation,
In the religion of the Prophet – only God I saw.
Neither soul nor body, accident nor substance,
Qualities nor causes – only God I saw.
Like a candle I was melting in His fire;
Amidst the flames outflashing – only God I saw.
Myself with mine own eyes I saw most clearly,
But when I looked with God's eyes – only God I saw.
I passed away into nothingness, I vanished,
And lo, I was the All-living – only God I saw."

"The existence of the beggar is His existence and the existence of the sick is His existence. Now when this is admitted, it is acknowledged that this existence is His existence and that the existence of all created things is His existence, and when the secret of one atom of the atom is clear, the secret of all created things, both outward and inward, is clear, you do not see in this world or the next, anything except God."

"I was a hidden treasure, and I desired to be known, so I created the world."

"Things lie hidden in their opposites, and but for the existence of opposites, the Opposer would have no manifestations."

"He alone is the Observer, He alone is the Observed!
There is none but He in the world of existence."

"Sufism consists of keeping the heart from anything that is not He. But there is not anything not He."

"I am the Existent and the non-existent:
That which comes to nought and that which abides.
I am that which is felt and that which is imagined:
I am both the snake and the charmer.
I am the loosed and the bound:
I am that which is drunk and he who gives to drink.
I am the treasure and I am the poverty:
I am my creation and the Creator."

"Whoever has fallen into the ocean of God's Oneness grows thirstier every day. His thirst will never be appeased because he has a thirst for truth and that is only quenched by the Real."

"Those who regard things as determined by God turn to God in everything."

"Abu Said was speaking before an assembly and he said,
'Today I am going to speak to you about astrology.'
All the people listened to the Sheikh with keen interest, wondering what he would say.
The Sheikh said, 'Oh people, this year whatever God wishes shall happen, just as last year everything that happened was what God, He is exalted, wished.' "

"We and Thou are not separate from each other,
but we need Thee, whereas Thou doest not need us."

"My servant ceases not to draw nigh unto Me by works of devotion, until I love him, and when I love him I am the eye by which he sees and the ear by which he hears."

"He is now as He was. He is the One without oneness and the Single without singleness... He is the very existence of the First and the very existence of the Last, and the very existence of the Outward and the very existence of the Inward. So there is no first nor last, nor outward nor inward, except Him, without these becoming Him or His becoming them... By Himself He sees Himself, and by Himself He knows Himself. None sees Him other than He, and none perceives Him other than He. His veil, that is phenomenal existence, is a part of His oneness; nothing veils other than He. His veil is only the concealment of His existence in His oneness. None sees Him other than He, no sent Prophet, nor saint made perfect, nor angel brought nigh know Him. His Prophet is He, and His sending is He, and His word is He. He sent Himself with Himself to Himself... There is no other and there is no existence other than He."

"Sometimes we call Thee wine, sometimes goblet,
Sometimes we call Thee corn, and sometimes snare,
There is no letter save Thy name on the tablet of the world –
Now: by which name shall we call Thee?"

"In the name of Him Who has no name,
Who appears by whatever name you will call Him."

"God made his name – Allah – a mirror for man, so that when he looks in it, he knows the true meaning of 'God was and there was naught beside Him', and in that moment it is revealed to him that his speech is God's speech, his life God's life, his knowledge God's knowledge, his will God's will and his power God's power..."

14. Annihilation of the Self

The Sufi seeks to "die before death", to transcend the ego and experience union with God. Transcending the ego is called annihilation, and is one of the most important stages on the path, leading to everlasting life in God. In the depths of the heart the lover becomes lost in the formlessness of love. Merging with the infinite ocean of the Self, he experiences a complete nothingness that is absolute fulfilment.

"Between me and You there lingers an 'it is I'
which torments me.
Ah! lift through mercy this 'it is I'
From between us both!"

"Go you, sweep out the dwelling-room of your heart, prepare it to be the abode and home of the Beloved: when you go out He will come in. Within you, when you are free from self, He will show His Beauty."

"Oh Lord God! I do not want myself. Give me release from myself."

"May God empty my very self
Of all except His own presence."

"The mystic is the knower without knowledge, without sight, without information, without apprehension, without description, without manifestation, and without veil. They (mystics) are not in themselves and if they are in themselves at all, they exist but in God. Their actions are held by God and their words are the words of God uttered by their tongues and their sight is the sight of God penetrated into their eyes."

"Oh Lord God, everyone has some wish, whereas I want to have no wish. And everyone has an 'I', whereas I want to have no 'I'. What I want is not to be me!"

"A hundred spiritual masters have spoken concerning Sufism. The first said the same as the last. The modes of expression were different but the meaning was one: 'Sufism is dropping all affectation.' And there is no affectation that comes before your own you-ness. The moment you become involved with your own self, you are cut off from Him."

"What you most want,
what you travel around wishing to find,
lose yourself as lovers lose themselves,
and you'll *be* that."

"Know that when you learn to lose yourself, you will reach the Beloved. There is no other secret to be learned, and more than this is not known to me."

"An hour reflecting on one's own non-existence is better than a year of religious devotions with the thought that one exists."

"As I reached the stage of proximity to God, He said, 'What thou dost desire?' I replied, 'I desire Thee.' He said, 'As long as there remains even one particle of Bâyezîdness in thee, that desire cannot be fulfilled.' "

"Kill me, O my faithful friends
For to kill me is to make me live;
My life is my death, and my death is my life."

"Thus it is that for your sake God protects you from yourself and causes you to pass by obliteration to eternal life, so that you achieve your desire and live eternally with Him."

"First there must be action and knowledge, so that you realize that you know nothing and you are nobody. It is no easy thing to attain this realization. It doesn't come with teaching and instruction, nor can it be sewn on with a needle, or tied with a thread. This is a gift from God and a question of whom He bestows it on and whom He causes to experience it."

“Being wholly present in God, he is wholly lost to self. And thus he is present before God, absent in himself; absent and present at the same time. He is where he is not and he is not where he is. Then after he has not been, he is where he is (before creation). He is himself, after he has not been truly himself. He is existent in himself and existent in God after having been existent in God and non-existent in himself. This is because he has left the drunkenness of God’s overwhelming and come to the clarity of sobriety, and contemplation is once more restored to him, so that he can put everything in its right place and assess it correctly.”

“Twenty-two years have been following in the footsteps of at-Tirmidhi. He had no feature and now I have no feature. Those who know will know and those who understand will understand.”

“Who do you think I am? A drunkard? A love-sick fool, a slave of my senses, made senseless by desire? Understand: I have risen above all that, I am the King of Love in majesty. My soul is purified from the darkness of lust, my longing purged of low desire, my mind free from shame. I have broken the teeming bazaar of the senses in my body. Love is the essence of my being. Love is fire and I am wood burnt by the flame. Love has moved in and adorned the house, my self tied up its bundle and left. You imagine that you see me, but I no longer exist: what remains is the Beloved...”

“I went from God to God, until He cried from me in me, ‘O Thou I’. Thus I attained the stage of annihilation in God.”

“A certain person came to the Friend’s door and knocked.

‘Who’s there?’

‘It’s me.’

The Friend answered, ‘Go away. There’s no place for raw meat at this table.’

The individual went wandering for a year.
Nothing but the fire of separation
can change hypocrisy and ego. The person returned
completely crooked,
walked up and down in front of the Friend’s house,
gently knocked.

‘Who is it?’

‘You.’

‘Please come in, my Self,
there’s no place in this house for two.’ ”

“One day in Nishapur, Abu Said went to a mourning ceremony. The masters of ceremonies wanted to announce the Sheikh in accordance with their customs, and recite his titles. But when they saw the Sheikh they were at a loss, and asked his disciples: ‘What title should we apply to the Sheikh?’ The Sheikh saw their confusion and said to them, ‘Go inside and announce: Make way for No One, the son of No One!’ ”

“ ‘The first time I entered the Holy House’, stated Bayezid, ‘I saw the Holy House. The second time I entered it, I saw the Lord of the House. The third time I saw neither the House nor the Lord of the House.’

By this Bayezid meant, ‘I became lost in God, so that I knew nothing. Had I seen at all, I would have seen God.’ Proof of this interpretation is given by the following anecdote:

A man came to the door of Bayezid and called out.

‘Whom are you seeking?’ asked Bayezid.

‘Bayezid’, replied the man.

‘Poor wretch!’ said Bayezid. ‘I have been seeking Bayezid for thirty years, and cannot find any trace or token of him.’ ”

“The people of perfection have realized all stations and states and passed beyond these to the station above both majesty and beauty, so they have no attribute and no description. It was said to Bayezid, ‘How are you this morning?’ He replied, ‘I have no morning and no evening; morning and evening belong to him who becomes delimited by attributes, and I have no attributes.’ ”

“Neither am I aware of being a lover, nor of love,
Neither of my self, nor of the Beloved.”

“Self-annihilation consists in this, that through the overpowering influence of the Very Being upon the inner man, there remains no consciousness of aught besides Him. Annihilation of annihilation consists in this, that there remains no consciousness even of that unconsciousness. It is evident that annihilation of annihilation is involved in annihilation.”

“Here is the candle extinguished and there the living light of the Sun!
Mark the difference between the one and the other!”

15. Union

Travelling the path of love, the Sufi longs for union with the Beloved. Finally the heart reveals the Eternal Truth, that the lover and the Beloved are one.

“I am He whom I love, and He whom I love is I.
We are two spirits dwelling in one body,
If thou seest me, thou seest Him;
And if thou seest Him, thou seest us both.”

“Love has come and it flows like blood beneath my skin, through my veins,
It has emptied me of my self and filled me with the Beloved.
The Beloved was penetrated every cell of my body.
Of myself there remains only a name, everything else is Him.”

"When the lover is annihilated in Love his love becomes one with the Love of the Beloved, and then there is no bird and no wings, and his flight and love to God are by God's love to him."

"I have embraced, with my whole being, all Your love,
O my Holiness! You have manifested Yourself so much
that it seems to me that there is only You in me!
I examine my heart amidst all that is not You.
I do not see any estrangement between them and me,
And only familiarity between You and me!"

"Love has appeared from Eternity and will continue till Eternity, and none has been found in eighty thousand worlds who could drink one drop of it until at last he is united with God."

"Once He raised me up and caused me to stand before Him and said to me, 'O Bayezid, My creatures desire to behold thee'. I answered, 'Adorn me with Thy Unity and clothe me in Thy I-ness and raise me to Thy Oneness so that when Thy creatures behold me they may say that they behold Thee, and that only Thou mayst be there, not I.' "

"In the state of unification man perceives that all is He, and all is by Him, and all is His. What formerly was known by hearsay now becomes known intuitively as he contemplates the works of God. Then he entirely recognizes that he has not the right to say 'I' or 'mine'."

"Glory be to me! How great is my majesty!"

"Inside this robe there is only God."

"His spirit is my spirit and my spirit is His spirit;
Let Him desire, and I desire – let me desire, He desires!"

"There are moments of oneness with the Beloved, absolute ecstasy and bliss. That is nothingness. And this nothingness loves you, responds to you, fulfills you utterly and yet there is nothing there. You flow out like a river, without diminishing. This is the great mystical experience, the great ecstasy."

"Union with God is separation from all else, and separation from all else is union with Him."

"A boy stopped before the circle of Shibli's followers and said, 'Oh, Abu Bakr, remove me from myself and make me absent from myself and then give me back to myself, so that I am He and He is I and I am I and He is He.'"

"The one who has looked at the sun and then looks at himself, finds he is filled with nothing else but rays of the sun and exclaims, 'I am the sun'."

"I am God, there is no God beside me, so worship me."

"Whoever states that he has attained God, has not,
Whereas whoever states that he has been taken to God,
Has indeed attained union with God."

"When I love a devotee, I, the Lord, become his ear so that he hears through Me, I become his eye so that he sees through Me, I become his tongue so that the speaks through Me, and I become his hand so that he possesses through Me."

"In God there is no duality. In that Presence 'I' and 'we' and 'you' do not exist. 'I' and 'you' and 'we' and 'He' become one... Since in the Unity there is no distinction, the Quest and the Way and the Seeker become one."

"Those who have attained union have nothing
But the inward eye and the divine lamp –
They have been delivered of signs and roads."

"Nothing is better for a man than to be without anything – having no ascetism, no theory, no practice. When he is without all, he is with all."

"The mystic is occupied neither with this world nor the next: he is not concerned with any but his Lord. Because he has died altogether to himself, he is completely absorbed in the attainment of union with God."

"It has been said that mystical poverty is the wearing of the black raiment in the two universes. This saying expresses the fact that the mystic is so totally absorbed in God that he has no longer any existence of his own, neither inwardly nor outwardly in this world and beyond; he returns to his original essential poverty, and that is poverty in the true sense. It is in this sense, when the state of poverty has become total, that a mystic can say that he is God..."

"God created the hearts seven thousand years before the bodies and kept them in the station of proximity to Himself, and He created the spirits seven thousand years before hearts and kept them in the garden of intimate fellowship with Himself, and the consciences – the innermost part – He created seven thousand years before the spirits and kept them in the degree of union with Himself. Then He imprisoned the conscience in the spirit and the spirit in the heart and the heart in the body. Then He tested them and sent them prophets, and then each began to seek his own station. The body occupied itself with prayer, the heart attained to love, the spirit arrived at proximity to its Lord, and the innermost part found rest and union in Him."

"How many words there were for you until when
I was able to meet you, I was made to forget them."

"Then the pilgrim returns home, to the home of his origin... that is the world of Allah's proximity, that is where the home of the inner pilgrim is, and that is where he returns. This is all that can be explained, as much as the tongue can say and the mind grasp. Beyond this no news can be given, for beyond is the unperceivable, inconceivable, indescribable."

Letters of the Scattered Brotherhood

If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine... and ye shall know the truth, and truth shall make you free.

St. John, Chaps. 7&8

Letter 1

Let us consider again what our daily living is, this human living without thought; the conduct of people, the philosophy needed to live upon earth, to live intelligently, the mystery of pleasure and pain. First it appears that we are spoiled from lack of discipline, self-discipline. We are ignorant, too, and full of wild emotions, savage dislikes, greed, pride; pride of family, of race, community and nation.

This emotional fever-bag is our danger, for left to itself, inflated by angry argument, it is destructive and overpowers the balance of clear thinking. Through it we are influenced and swayed by passing events, the daily news and all the harm of misinformation. When possessed by states that are ungoverned, even while we carry our outward poise, there is a kind of lawlessness that swings to inertia, a what's-the-use attitude of mind, a refusal to make an effort which is a kind of lawlessness also. A child asks, Why is it necessary to have law and discipline? Because it is needful to establish a balanced order of conduct. Think for a moment of yourselves as raw material; through your acceptance or rejection of a thought, an idea, you establish your lives, your individualities. Emotion is as wild and unpredictable as the weather and must be faced and dominated. No wonder the ancients called it the devil, for at times it will run away with you, weaken your resolves, loosen your armor and plunge you into hell. Here is where pain often comes in and is indeed the drill sergeant. You have seen how many wild natures have been touched and softened by pain and sorrow. But why go that way to illumination? You who have started on this strange and beautiful journey, who have sensed immortality and touched it, have opened a door into a place where the mystery of life will be simplified for you if you will obey these promptings from within.

For many this is beyond understanding and they seek the satisfaction of penance in sacrifice and good works. That is not to be condemned, but it is only the first step, for as was said by one who lived in the thirteenth century, "Visible deeds do not increase the goodness of the inner life, however long and broad, whatever their number or dimension; its goodness is its own. The visible deeds of virtue can never be worth much if the inward process is small or has little life; but they never can be of little worth if the inner life is rich and great. The inner

life goes on perpetually and draws upon God, from the very heart of Him, for the inner life of a man is His son."

Therefore obey the promptings that come to you from within when you have true communion with Him, and you will learn your requirements, your disciplines, renunciations as well as illumination and the peace that passeth all understanding. With this knowledge, you will find that it will be very uncomfortable for you if you get out of balance. This power held in stillness will go far toward stopping wars, for it will indeed move mountains and bring order out of chaos, as it is a living force. If you believe that character can be changed or transmuted, act on the promise. For to be freed from the laws of the material world we must pay the price, and the price is to make this instrument clean, pure, steady, vigilant, strong and faithful in little things.

Come closer to the center of all light; come freed from the ignorant emotional habits, from subtle appetites of prejudice and criticism. More is told you than by spoken words; only make way for the Light and you will be oriented and held in safety, and great will be the results in your day, your hours, your seconds of time. The mystery of living will then be revealed to you... it is the transmutation of this living entity into the divine spiritual Man.

That which is now called the Christian religion existed among the ancients, and never did not exist from the planting of the human race until Christ came in the flesh, at which time the true religion which already existed began to be called Christianity.

St. Augustine, *Opera*, Basileae, 1569

Letter 2

Yes, it is always more or less the same problem, that of dealing with the states of mind, and as we have told you before, they are nothing but challenging thoughts rearing up to attack you. When we first told you that all things human can be resolved to thought, you received an intellectual perception; you received also that when your mind is tempted from its spiritual center, your defenses are lowered, and you automatically allow the outer you to have more freedom than is his right. Now that you have come into a small degree of realization of this truth, there is still a tonal recollection of the fear contained in the old thoughts, and that fear lies heavy on the Spirit. Try to throw all that into the limbo where it belongs, give it no fastening room; it will then clutch emptiness and be swept away. Your task is to remain eternally unshaken within, to meet untoward states with what we have called action-thought. Heavenly thought is divine order; it is clean, it is joy, serenity and peace, and it will bring about your victory; no more to rear in anxious thought or chaotic emotion. Let them fall off like the dreary bundle they are and step forward in divine manhood.

In human relations refrain from the luxury of emotional storms of resentments and “righteous” indignation. There is no righteousness in emotional violence, and if you are assailed in the shadowy night when your armor is loosened, pray simply, as you did when you were a child, for has it not been written, “The entrance of thy words giveth light”?

The task for this period is not to let uncreative thought have lodging room. You say you make pictures; your mind conceives them like dark magic. Try not to do this, and the best way not to make negative pictures is to make spiritual pictures. Let into your mind the noble company of thoughts, thus will you keep out the rabble. Make your mental company glorious.

I understand your dilemma. The mind grows tired of one thing, and once it tires and dries up, you must have a bright new toy to catch the careering mind and give it fresh comfort. You are not alone in this. The stream of consciousness is often like a disorder; a fumbling, a groping of the human race, is this formless thinking. The great ones have left many guideposts and I will recall one to you: “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is *stayed* on thee.” Be careful not to misunderstand this and sink into solemnity which can become melancholy. Do not strain at gnats; release others, release yourself, be gay, be reborn, be refreshed!

And the Voice went forth throughout the world... and each one heard it according to his capacity; old men and youths and boys and sucklings and women: the Voice was to each one as each one has the power to receive it.

Shemoth [R.c:v.]

Letter 3

In this journey you have set out upon, you play a dual role; you are both doctor and patient. You are both human and spiritual, wise and foolish, good and bad, civilized and savage. There are those who say there is no evil. Let us not be confused for there are subtle contradictions that lead to trouble. “In *Him* there is no variableness neither shadow of turning”, *He* is the light in whom there is no darkness at all; but where light is not, where destructive human emotions are in control, there is the manifestation of darkness; there is human savagery; there is chaos. When the individual wakes to the knowledge that God is to be known and turns his face toward light, he takes the first step toward realization of his godhood; with faith as his shield, the sword of the Spirit in his hand and the spurs of resolution on his feet, he presses on to his fulfillment as a son of God. This is the way to become reborn, the opportunity our human birth has given us. And it is not wise ever to underestimate the strength of our enemy, the prejudices, weaknesses and fearfulness of the human self. We will not suffer such

dismay if we know we have them to deal with. But do not give these emotions power over you by dwelling on them in morbid discouragement. This is where you are doctor as well as patient, and awareness of the Love of the indwelling Christ is the medicine; it is the antidote; it is the healing of the Spirit; abide in it, for of yourself you can do nothing, and in Him all things are possible.

In the human experience are warring natures, hot fermentations, old doubts and cynicisms, the soul sicknesses from which you can be freed if you will set your heart upon Him. His healing balsam is Love; it is given you to compound; it cannot be thrust upon you.

May the Lord of all, the very real and present Saviour, the very quick, the very vital, breathe His health in you and fill you with divine breath; may He hold your mind in stillness, quicken your thoughts, speak with your tongue and listen with your ear; may He give you the impulse of the moment that you may hold it, illumined.

One has said, "This is no voyage for a little barque, this which my venturesome prow goes cleaving, nor for a pilot who would spare himself." And yet today when the earth is more greatly troubled than ever before, whole communities of people turn their faces away from their responsibility to a world in peril. In their daily lives, where vigilance should begin, they cling to habits of comfort and self-indulgence, eyes dull, ears stopped, inertia and indifference like chains upon their feet. At no time is this voyage for a pilot who would spare himself, for his soul's sake, for his beloved's sake, and for the sake of his country.

This is a solemn time, for which you have been gently prepared. Keep in the simple path; keep in the Word and it will set you free. And by that is meant that you should be valiant in your insistence upon keeping aware so that you hear the voice within, that the Word may abide in you and in the midst of confusion keep your Spirit in peace. This is your role; this is your great service to mankind. Let "I am the Light of the world within thee!" be your battle cry.

Have you anything more important to do? Ask yourself that question when interruptions threaten and you are tempted to set this hour aside... It is not a futile task. Once the inter-relation of all created things is even dimly sensed, one cannot be small. The mantle of magnitude is over the most humble part of the whole.

Betty White

Letter 4

The reason the world is in this state is because it has not been alert, awake, vigilant in obeying the words of the Spirit. Hate, the negations, the antitheses of the Spirit, have been vigilant; the negatives always are. You have been more awake because you disciplined yourselves within; because you sought and found. But your scale is much too small where it should be higher in its vigilance and this is the reason you feel the outside pressure as much as you do and find it so difficult to withstand. This awareness of God must be fiery; you must be ablaze with it, for then it will be felt and the picture of its glory will be translated now, this minute, into a welling up of faith and power. You know that much of your trouble is due to your own inertias. In spite of them, think what a gift you have with which to face this crisis. Every waking moment stand in God's presence with Him in your heart. In quiet and confidence is your strength, and from now on, when you go out into life, do not go in your human dignities, but go as an ambassador of God, that through your abiding in Him you may translate His words into daily living. Through your quiet communions you will be given humility and power, for you can offer yourself as a living channel for Him to pour through His healing wisdom; "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you." Accept this divine gift wholeheartedly. There are those who cry out, "Why does God allow these things to be?" Do we allow Him His way with us? If you choose, you can join the army of spiritual soldiers, marching invincible, in an invisible world, in immortality now.

... Much depends upon making up your mind. The nature of the human animal, as you well know, is subject to suggestion; the feeling-nature, when left to human devices, is unprotected, easily dismayed, elated, bored, irritated. The mind is moved by noises, cold heat, stupidities, a letter, the disloyalty of a friend. But when the mind is made up, all these challenges can be divinely met; you are not defenseless. You are only defenseless when you are spiritually asleep. Bring into focus your godhood, your divine manhood by saying, "I make up my mind to be in the light of faith always, while I talk to people, while I walk, while I eat, wherever I go, into every house. I will use it against all alarms; I will dwell in this eternal patience, in God's name I will be reborn!"

Because God made not death; neither delighteth He when the living perish. For He created all things that they might have being; and the generative powers of the world are healthsome and there is no poison of destruction in them, nor hath hades royal dominion upon earth, – for righteousness is immortal.

Wisdom of Solomon

For one soul that exclaims, "Speak Lord, for Thy servant heareth", there are ten that say, "Hear Lord! for Thy servant speaketh", and there is no rest for these.

Pamela Grey

Letter 5

Someone said long ago, "Religion is not a melancholy; the Spirit of God is not a dampe!" We have told you many times to keep from any tendency toward sadness, resignation and melancholy in your lives; the Spirit must never be resigned nor melancholy nor gloat upon sorrow, which in some, unfortunately, is associated with a spiritual way of life. If the Spirit is real, it is joy in essence; it is peace and faith. Now faith, divine faith, is an illumined state; it challenges everything mortal with a confident joy; indeed I would like to use the word merriment instead of joy here, as in the old English song, "God rest you merry, gentlemen; let nothing you dismay!" Yes, the world is sad, tragic and the suffering is terrible. But we have been shown how in such times we must and can be gallant; and to be gallant is to be joyous; and to have true joy, we must have faith. The kingdom of heaven is happiness, because those who have found it and abide in it have become aware of the beauty of the infinite Spirit. Those who live in that kingdom know that everything must be met and challenged with a shout; challenge everything with the Spirit of joy. This may seem a hard saying, for it seems to leave out pity. No, the lifting quality of confidence, of faith in ultimate victory, heals, sustains and comforts those in darkness and sorrow. If you can keep your inspiration gaily, confidently, many of the discouraging human attributes will be purified. The secret is – and this is what you are here for – to find the pearl of great price, to keep from losing it, from letting it grow dull and to remember that it has the power to release you from those characteristics which have held you a prisoner to your own limitations. This is being on the side of the angels.

The Eternal is good to those who wait for Him, to a soul who seeks Him. It is good to wait in silence for the help of the Eternal; let a man sit alone in silence, since it is the Eternal's hand.

Lamentations, Chap.2 (Moffatt)

Letter 6

In these days of strain, beware of the emotions that are hosts to violence, for they lead to sorrow. Silence is your role. It isn't that we ask you to keep out of the arena, but it is necessary to wear the armor of God when you are in it. If you would bring victory for goodness and order and peace, be a channel for the omnipotent Spirit to flow through and do the work in splendor. Watch your human weaknesses that frustrate and clog the channel. Be on guard and keep in the invisible remembering that of yourselves you can do nothing; the Father within doeth the work.

I will make a picture for you which may be helpful.

You close your eyes to the outside world. Think of yourself, your mind, as a shining surface within a circle that can contract and grow small or expand and grow larger, smooth and glowing. A thought, like a speck of dust, floats down, touches the surface, and immediately the surface contracts to a pin point and is concerned with a fear in that speck of thought. Hot cinders of irritation lodge on this smooth surface of content and happiness; the circle contracts and the cinder seems to become a mountain in proportion to the surface, and fills your whole conscious life. To perfect the reality of your daily life, you are to remove the cinders, the specks of dust, the hot ashes of emotion, by illuminating this surface in the circle until it consumes all foreign matter which these thoughts personify, and the secret is the instant attack. Your creative thought, sublimated by imagination, will transmute and dispel the fears, the reactions to human duplicities and betrayals that so violently irritate the surface and involuntarily hold your attention.

There; it's a clumsy metaphor. But what we are trying to tell you is that by overcoming through awareness, by abstinence and being free from anything that binds or enslaves, you keep your circle shining and wide as the universe. But be aware, be aware of your tongue's betrayal, of thoughts that enfeeble you. Shake off these things which are appetites in strange disguises, that you may be a channel for power to pour through you to the human race. Keep the surface of this circle within you free from dust and cinders that come to contract your glory into littleness.

It is difficult when the outside is hard pressed by the trouble in the world to keep the inside serene, but it is only difficult when you think that *you* can make it serene. The serenity will be given you; that is the benediction and the reward for those who sought and knocked and found. You are here at this moment, at this time, at this place, in this Presence, and the Presence is the only Reality, and he is thy shepherd.

Simple said, I see no danger; Sloth said, Yet a little more sleep; and Presumption said, Every vat must stand upon his own bottom. And so they lay down to sleep again, and Christian went on his way.

Pilgrim's Progress

Letter 7

Not long ago, a statement for faith in action was given to one whose daily work is complicated by harassing personalities, perhaps one of the most difficult tests of character for all of us. I quote it for you: "Say to yourself, 'I will keep all controversial opinion, all human impulses and talk *without* myself, in the outer realm of my life, for I know that trial and error, failures and half successes, the onslaught of personalities, obstinacies both within and without my own personality, are the passing and changing elements of living. I shall keep them outside the walls of my fortress. I know that within me, in the quietness beyond silence, is the assurance of immortal life and the potentiality for peace here and now. I know by this act, this sacrament of communion with the divine Presence within me, I am being freed from those responses and impulses that would keep me earth bound. I know that as I live this life, it is but an echo as compared to the Life within, eternal, immortal, omniscient'. Take strength, my daughter, from these words, for they will be a healing breath to your body and they are protection to your mind. Go about thy work serene and free."

To another was said: "Receive the assurance of your protection; know with confidence that gentleness within is your strength. The immediate dismays and obstacles are apt to blind us from seeing our objectives. Do not bruise yourself against a stone wall, and do not ask why, because the knowledge needful is given you step by step, and what is most needful at this measured moment in your time, is that you realize your protection through a gentle Spirit within yourself, that you are aware of this and keep faith in the invisibility of the Holy Ghost, the glory of the great and good peace of your inner Self. Go thy way, knowing. The reason so many are cynical in the confusions and alarms is because the wrongs are being worked out; they make the noise in the world, the tragic sound that brings sudden terror and dismay. The very quietness of goodness is undramatic and therefore too often unseen. You have a part to play; every living soul has a part to play. So do not forget your special role and do not underestimate the unseen influence of a son of God. Abide in His words and go thy way in peace."

*Hope holds to Christ the mind's own mirror out
To take His lovely likeness more and more.*

*There is your world within.
There rid the dragons, root out the sin.
Your will is law in that small commonweal.*

Gerard Manley Hopkins, 1844-1889

Letter 8

When you have reached a new and higher plane of spiritual awareness, remember that with it comes the challenge to abide there. The experience of deeper peace and joy is apt to carry with it what we may call personal confidence as well as a more profound realization that it has been a gift of the Spirit, the inevitable reward of aspiration and holy intent. Your work is to guard it like country newly won, so that it will not be retaken by the enemies – within yourself. And those enemies which we speak of so often are the tendencies of the mind and body to reach out for diversions and excitements and indulgences. As I have said before, many of these things in themselves are not harmful. It is how you value them that makes them enemies – or not. Fast and pray, as he said, to keep the ground you have won a holy place; and by fasting and praying I mean a state of mind, and alertness, an awareness of where you are, what you are. You are either in light or darkness, up or down, depending upon the quality of your thought; this is not a duty but a glorious opportunity, this choosing what you shall be and living in spiritual action. Fasting means not drifting, not letting yourself go to shapeless thought, for desires are there and appetites. Prayer is adoration; it is surrender to the inner glory, to the gentle Spirit that will lift you so that your foot shall not stumble.

I am going to ask you to read the following dialogue, for I believe you will hear your own voice in it, and that you will recognize the other voice as well.

FIRST VOICE: How easily the senses keep us in a state of fear!

SECOND VOICE: That is because you live in them, through them, by them.

FV: How else?

SV: If you live from within, abiding in the Spirit, you would come to know and trust it and its power against the evidence of the senses. What is material, concrete to you, you believe in. Fear is faith in your antagonist.

FV: If I could know satiety instead of the besieging appetites of mind and body!

SV: No; ask for dominion, “bringing every thought into captivity.” It is an inspiring freedom.

FV: What use to try an impossible thing?
 SV: Do not question; it was done. An infinite love meets every effort, and the reward is commensurate with divine understanding. Besides, it is really joyous!
 FV: Can I say, "Today I will walk in the true way", with any confidence that I shall succeed at all?
 SV: It is your safety, your protection and your delight – if you will believe it.
 FV: Oh why is my desire so easily turned aside by the beasts?
 SV: It isn't, ultimately. "He that ploweth should plow in hope." And remember in times of pressure "that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple", and that "every man that striveth for mastery is temperate in all things".
 FV: It is a lonely fight.
 SV: No one is alone: He said, "He that sent me is with me, the Father hath not left me alone".
 FV: That I might know Him as my involuntary self-control!
 SV: Ask – that your joy may be full!

Letter 9

Some of you say, why is this silence you speak of so important? Or, he is a mystic; as if that put a person outside of the life of practical religion. What is religion? What is a "faith"? Are they not worship of God and a belief that we can know Him? Jesus said that external life was a state of mind, that is, if knowing something is a state of mind, when he said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee".

Let us be quite honest and ask ourselves how we can know Him and if there is any other way than through communion with Him as well as that communion can be made. Can we learn anything without listening, even in the sense of scholastic study? Complete attention in a classroom is the first step in an institution of learning.

The student with a steadfast heart, whose first desire is to learn of Him and worship Him, must in the end give complete attention; "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear". Surely the two commandments of Jesus were given by him in their legal order; thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and thy neighbor as thyself. Can we love our neighbor as he meant us to do it without knowing anything of the love of God? Paul answers that in no uncertain terms "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor... it profiteth me nothing. Though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing."

To have eternal life through knowledge of God is to learn of Him, to learn of His love from Him, and then to put it into action in our everyday world. Acts without faith can work good but faith without acts is hard to imagine, and the consequences are inevitable. Neither way belongs to the children of God who desire to come into knowledge of their godhood.

How can we learn of Him except through communion with Him? How commune with Him except in silence? It can only be through putting aside for intervals of quiet all human activities, not only of the hands but of the mind. And if you think you are master of your mind, watch your mind when you try to still it.

Let us make an image that will help you. Suppose you wished with all your heart to be in His Presence and suddenly Christ appeared to you to teach you. Would you have a thought of any importance whatever to offer him? Could any human experience matter in the least? Could you listen and hear unless you offered your mind completely to him? What prayer conceived in your mind would matter at all? What human act, what experience received through the senses would contribute to the transcendent experience of simply being aware of him?

And yet you say, I believe he dwells within me.

Do you clean the room of your mind and invite him in to reveal himself to you? Not that you may talk to him?

Why must we go to him in silence and not in prayer as we usually know it?

Because he said, "... I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you... and he that loveth me shall be loved of my father and I will love him and will manifest myself to him".

If therefore ye are intent upon wisdom, a lamp will not be wanting and a shepherd will not fail, and a fountain will not dry up.

Anonymous

Letter 10

Let us continue our talk begun in the last letter.

How can we invite Him in, He that is the eternal guest? What can we do that He may “manifest Himself” to us? More than one has asked if there is not a “technique”. I am tempted to wonder if such a question does not indicate the lack of simplicity that is required. But let us see what we can give in a primer talk. First, I refer you to our last letter. Can the human mind bring anything but worship and a desire to know to that still place of quiet where He comes to reveal Himself?

It is therefore necessary that we make a time and place for these communions. Later on you will find there is no place where you cannot turn your mind to Him and find Him; while walking, waiting at street corners, during a lull in conversation and through making the humblest work an act of praise. Laughter is a door that is always near! Joy and a lifted spirit are part of the eternity in which you can live with Him now.

The simple instructions I give here are for the beginner; and let him always remember that “when thou shalt search for me with all thy heart, thou shalt find me”. Find Him and the way to Him, if the desire is great enough.

Find a comfortable chair in a quiet room; if that is difficult go into one of the many churches that are always open. You will at once feel a self-consciousness, but as you have no audience that will pass. If there is tension in the body, relax it, for bodily tension indicates mental tension. Put aside a quarter of an hour; a short time you may say, but in less than three minutes you will find that not only does your body want to walk away, but your mind has begun to race.

It is rather humiliating to find how little we are masters of our minds. But be very gentle and say to your body, as you would to a child, “I think you had better sit still in that chair until I tell you to go”. For the racing, undisciplined mind, I would suggest that at first you repeat, whenever it is necessary to call it back, some of the great words which have been given to us because the Spirit dwells in them, in the knowledge they bring to us of It. Repeat very gently and only as often as the mind slips away from you, one of these sentences. “I keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on me.” “I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you.” One wrote in the fourteenth century: “If thou desirest to have thy intent lapped and folden in one word, so that thou mayest have better hold thereon, take thee but a little word which (may in thy case) accordeth better with the work of the Spirit. And such a word is this word God or this word Love. Choose whichever thou wilt and fasten this word to thine heart.” But choose what will best bring you to the infinite stillness within yourself; not forgetting that after you have become practiced, you can find it wherever you are in the noise and confusion of the street if you so wish. Do not look for anything, for there should be no sensation, no ecstasy. It should be an experience of

extreme simplicity, natural and divinely normal. Your part is to “bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself.”

One said many centuries ago, “For at the first time when thou dost it thou findest but a darkness, thou knowest not what, saving thou *feelest in thy will a naked intent unto God*... He asketh no help but only thyself. He wills thou do but look upon Him and let Him alone... Love knocks and enters, all else stands without.” And St. Denis prayed, “I beseech Thee to draw us up to the shining height of Thy inspired speakings where all secret things that are divine be covered under the sovereign-shininig darkness of wisest silence”.

And our Lord Jesus Christ said, “What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light”.

If the tumult of the flesh were hushed, hushed the images of water, earth and air, hushed also the poles of heaven, yea, the very soul herself, hushed all dreams and imaginary revelations and whatsoever exists only in transition, having roused only our ears to Him who made them, and He alone speaks, not by them but by Himself that we may hear His word, not through any tongue of flesh, nor Angel's voice, nor sound of thunder, nor in the dark riddle of a similitude, – then we might hear Whom in these things we love, might hear His Very Self.

St. Augustine, *Confessions*, A. D. 353

Letter 11

Here He is, here He is! I cannot say here He stands, for that would be placing Him materially. The nearest way to His nearness is through a refined essence of Spirit. If you could distill thought, you would get near the refinement. As thought is to emotion, so this quality of perception and feeling is to thought. That is why it is impossible for human thought to conceive it. He is here, eternally here, your friend and saviour and that is why meditation, the laying aside of human thought which is a heavy mechanism, is so essential.

You know you have had glimpses into this world of Spirit when you have sat on a mountain or by the sea and been awed into a stillness beyond your ordinary stillness by a sunset or a universe of stars; that silence beyond silence is the silence He presses through, and the flaming powers, the inspirations, the immortalities; this is the Presence, the pure Presence. Here is where it is all accomplished, for this is He, eternally here.

The love of Jesus Christ here is personal in so far as it broods over you, through you in this region unreachable, untouchable except through the refinement that takes place in your silences. It may be that you can touch it for only very short moments, yet that is enough to live on forever more.

Therefore your God is personal to you inasmuch as you have reached through feeling, past thought into infinite inducing silence... He is here.

It is peace to you, health to your body, to your mind and heart. You will be sweetened when you quiet emotion, quiet thought and are still, to meet your heavenly comforter. So close your eyes, put away all thought and lie deep in the silent reaches where you will be restored, reborn, made new. Here He is.

Christ shall come to thee showing thee His consolation if thou make for Him within thee a worthy dwelling place; all His glory and honour is within and there is His pleasure.

Thomas à Kempis, 1379-1471

Letter 12

In the last talk with you, the approach to silent meditation was given you. Today I am going to tell you a little of both the peace and perplexity that one meets when first starting upon this way. First let me say with all the emphasis I can, that difficult as it is, particularly for the beginner, it is the easiest and happiest way and the chief problem is getting used to the newness of it; of turning about and walking in another direction with the old human arguments tugging at us.

You have read the words, "Take no thought... seek ye first the kingdom... Trust me and I will make plain thy path." But many of you have not acted upon them, upon the truth hidden in them although you have given a loyal belief; but that is not enough; you must seek and search with all your heart and with all your mind, and the reason for this is because in perfect silence you can be at one with the Father and from such immortal silence comes serenity, confidence, and wisdom for your life. In the beginning you may have a change of feeling which is encouragement, but many do not get out of that antechamber.

We are trying to make you understand that the august stillness which comes when you are alone with your high resolve is so beyond your ordinary comprehension that you may think nothing has taken place, as if there were no results. It is difficult for the human mind to enter the inner consciousness where the Spirit dwells because of the old habit of the mind to wander, to be excited by the human things that interest and compel attention. But with gentleness bring your mind back to your purpose; "Watch therefore, for you know not when your

Lord cometh." For He will come, at first perhaps as delicately as a breath. Ask yourself, should you not earn it by your steadfast purpose? Why should we receive it instantly, with no renewed faith?

A cathedral in all its splendor and lofty beauty gives you satisfaction because you see it, hear it and react to its great solemnity. It has to the uninspired mind more power than going into the invisible, into the *idea cathedral* which was in the architect's mind before anything was made manifest, before thought was born from the invisible desires and conceptions and needs of man.

A strange thing, this love of God. I say I love God and go eagerly to sit in His Presence and then nothing happens. My conscious mind travels down every bypath of present or past events and I am as far away from God as my own mind. But to comfort you I tell you that the performance of the act, the intent toward Him, will bring what you need. Tiredness will be drawn away, strain lifted and though you feel as if nothing great had happened, it is a little as if the captain of a ship at sea had changed his course and the passengers had not been aware that he had turned toward a new horizon on the way to safety.

Let these words lead you through the very small door that leads to timeless eternal space and beauty. "I surrender to Thy divine guidance; I bathe in Thy light. Of myself I can do nothing. All life cometh from Thee. Thou art the life of my life. Thou art before time; order my life and teach me the way to go. Give me the faith and power to fulfill Thy word for Thou art the holy Spirit, and Comforter."

Letter 13

We have talked about the startle of daily life, how it is not the reality, but the dream life that you see. For when you are plunged into the sea of sensuous existence, your true life leaves you like smoke. It evaporates into the stuff of dreams; it is hard to hold to yourself. Let us try to understand the deep meaning of atonement, at-one-ment.

Your past experiences are past indeed; those strains and emotions of sensuous life are gone and what has remained is the temple of your own building, that edifice not built by hands. The reality of you is in the invisible, the intangible. In retrospect your spiritual milestones stand stronger to you in their fixed position than any outward experience. Having arrived at this understanding, try now, quietly, gently, without too much effort of self-discipline, to keep in the invisible, train yourself to keep immaterial. Watching and praying are essential. When hard pressed by old habits and you are under the heavy blanketings of times and events, you, as it were, disappear. This is the moment to step back into the invisible, for then the invisible will enfold you and give you great power in the visible world.

Acquire new habits; I cannot tell you how, I can only try to awaken your desire. If your desire is to be in the Presence of the infinite omniscient Spirit, it must mean that you lay down your sensuous material life that you may find strength and happiness, beauty and knowledge, by being in holy communion with the Spirit within. Do not misunderstand me in this; play is good, is necessary and normal; pleasures are important; the question is – What does your mind feed upon? What is your scale of values? To meet this Spirit within, which is invisible to the human life, you must acquire a quality and a technique in dwelling in the invisible while in the visible.

You know, you sense, as does the race in spite of its trial and error existence, that there are forces beyond our understanding. As you become stronger in your realization of this immortality within you, the clearer will the way be revealed to you... how to keep yourself dissolved and refined in the betraying, impinging, benumbing, outer visible world that you may find yourself strong and serene while in the flesh. See your true Self as a high mountain, calm and lofty, still and eternal. The daily task, the mean, the malicious, the challenging, the seeming meaningless of this little, measured existence – see through them all while you are in them, to the lofty pinnacle of your inner Self. Nothing here has scale; limitless, infinite, transcendent.

Now that you know, now that you begin to realize your godhood, take measures to keep invisible in a visible world, immortal in a mortal world, eternal in a changing world, continually reborn in a dying world.

He shall take holiness for an invisible shield.

Wisdom of Solomon

Letter 14

In answering your age-old question, I fear I must give the age-old answer. What you suffer from is what everyone suffers from, the rusting, the tarnish of everyday life in the effort to keep the Spirit shining; but as my brother said, I say to you – hold, do not let go. The temptation to distraction is childlike and common to all of us and in the consciousness of the race. Nations tarnish, too, and rot and weaken and invite violence and suffering. To wash away the heavy oiliness of materialism is a task requiring the constant vigilance of the brotherhood, and this idea with its suggestion of effort sometimes tires one. For this reason I would like to give you the evidence of my own experience.

Some of us, all our lives long, think we cannot do a certain thing; suddenly we are forced to act, and behold, we do it and know a great satisfaction. Well, then, do not stay behind with your beggar thoughts and sit outside the cathedral with these rascals, who tempt you to say, "The task is too difficult. I am this, I am

that, I fell here, I fell there.” No, stand up and shake off these fears which will first drain and numb you, then steal your garment of immortality and tear it into rags, taking the light out of it and changing its color to ashen gray. No! Don’t idle with the wailers and the complainers, but march into the temple and stand among the radiant company where you belong. Take your place with the good and the immortal and the everlasting, the serene and the mighty, the merciful and the glorious. Who are these? How do you reach them? My brother, these are the saints, always waiting. Don’t you see that by steadfastly holding to them, you will be pulled away and up and brought before the high table with its damask, white as the highest heaven? Do not lag back in dreary contemplation, but act on the highest impulse. By saying that you are a poor, weak sinner, by naming these attitudes of unworthiness, you are so much delayed. Of course, it is a struggle: out of rock, then out of mud, then out of heavy liquid, then water, then air, then light – then more light, then thought, and here we are.

You know well that these beggars outside the temple, these temptations, have each a distinct personality, each a characteristic; is it not true? Therefore, each is a thought. The ancients said that beauty was to be found in the treasury of memory, memory of our flight with the gods; in memory and in intuition. And as you have been tempted by thought, so you can reach the divine experience by thought. Who could be a spineless worm if he turned his mental face toward that sweating face of him who once carried a cross!

Only one thing do I know that has been my gift, which has brought to my humble parish the simple and the hurt. That one thing is that I must never, never whine nor sit down with my old body and pity it. No, I learned that to think of the man of Galilee and hold him in my mind made for me a habit, so that I was always looking past the people around me, waiting to catch a glimpse of his garment. And by thus thinking, catch a glimpse of his garment. And by thus thinking, when tempted to dawdle with the mourners, I found to my amazement I was an invited guest, and now behold, I am blinded by the glory about me.

What makes me wonder is the simplicity and naturalness of it. So don’t stop to think with the beggars in their rags, but go searching among your thoughts and family and friends and times for the sight of his garment and you, too, will be a honored guest.

My last word is again, watch your thought; peg it high; hold it there, for you will not find this an effort; it will not be tiring, because peace can only be found in action. That is why you will find great hearts among the humble, because they work. It isn’t as the poets tell, that they find comfort in the earth. No, it is in the glory of the mind.

He doth not force us, but after divers manners gives drink to those that will follow Him, that none go away disconsolate or die of thirst; for from this rich spring issue rivers, some great, others small ones, and sometimes pools for little children since that sufficeth them, and the beholding of a great water would but more affright them.

St. Teresa, 1515-1582

You are in that place to testify.

Emerson's *Journal*, 1803-1882

Letter 15

You entertain the Spirit because of the desire within you; spasmodically, it is true, and with irregularity, but the desire is there. And the Spirit you have entertained has burned away heavy impurities – ignorance and heavy lethargies. And the burning away of dross through spiritual growth is the beginning of spiritual health. The spiritual action to let in light and more light, Spirit and more Spirit, with its understanding and power, is a gift that will make you free, for it will teach you to stand with your inner you and look out undismayed through the outer you. You are beginning to change the base of your operations. I will explain in simple allegory what has happened, for your help; for those, who, like yourself, have sought the way for the way's sake, go through a definite process.

It is as if, before you had self-conscious understanding, you had been encased in clay and the clay took on life and went about its business carrying the sleeping you within. Clay, being clay, took on the Spirit of clay life. One day the clay of your particular entity was pierced by a light, a revelation which woke this sleeping you, and the clay-self turned to it and found a comforting remembrance, peace and reassurance. You become more alive, or better still, more awake. This is a clumsy picture of what has taken place, but it may help to show you how after more light poured through because of your awakened desire, the clay began to dry, and turn to dust and cracked and gave way, so that the outer encasement is growing thinner and thinner. This is an inward picture; it has nothing to do with the body except as the body reflects health and release. Those who are doing what you are attempting are spared much of the bludgeoning the clay is heir to. Instead of going through fire to be tempted, you deliberately ignite and illumine yourself with this inward flame. You burn yourself free and step clear of the rough and tumble, the trial and error and the hard law of consequences that wait in the dark for those who carry no lamps. In this there is great responsibility and joy.

If the weaknesses are not met spiritually, they thicken the clay again and faith becomes dulled, tarnished. Do you not begin to realize the importance of the working method of examining the moment as it comes and making it spiritual? You have sensed at last that when an outside problem of vexation or decision comes, instead of letting your outer you be consumed, it is happier to keep in your divine personality.

Burn your own dross, temper your own steel, and be spared. Not through a selfish motive nor through fear of punishment, but through love of truth and beauty. Goodness and mercy, order and beauty and inspiration are in this inner you, and this heavenly radiance is melting away the dross of old habits, mental states, weaknesses, inertias and fears; not only those of your lifetime but those inherited through the past from the race. It is a large order that you have asked for! Therefore keep released from tensions, relax in quiet and in the confidence which is your strength.

Letter 16

It is as if you climbed and reached a plateau where you could rest and consolidate your gains for awhile and gather strength through an inner, eternal voice. You go on and up with so much less dross until you reach another plateau and lie a little weary, but with a most wondrous sense that you are stronger; so you go, ever climbing and getting freer from delaying emotions and habits. That is being shriven. So in this clay, and workaday, violent life, march gaily upward out of the teeming plains, through the dark forest, up on the cliffs where the way is less crowded. Climb the heights and soon you will find you have escaped and are alone in the clear air, air that is revivifying, restoring. Be a good athlete, self-disciplined, tried and free. It may seem strange to give you a picture where there is so much effort and struggle – for it is not so; the yoke is easy, the burden is light compared to the way of the flesh. There is no effort spiritually, though you find you have to do things that tire the body, for you carry with you your knowledge of high peace like a lofty mountain peak high up in the silence near the stars. As one has said, “What I say is commonplace, but if it became a conviction, it would change the faith of the world.”

*Nor stoney tower, nor walls of beaten brass,
Nor airless dungeon, nor strong linkes of iron,
Can be retentive to the strength of Spirit...*

Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*

Letter 17

Let us consider the instruction “Take no thought of what ye shall say” or do. Take no thought. There is a tendency to become self-conscious in spiritual striving; there is an itch to do good, a sense of an effort to help. There are many spiritual busybodies! But the gift a man has with animals, or with children and flowers is inarticulate and silent and unself-conscious, without words that have been thought out. It is because no one has any idea of what is felt by those around him if he is one-pointed to the Source within.

As we have said so often, your whole task is to take steps that lead to that secret place, and when the last step is taken and you sit in silence with the Word, you become one with the Spirit, with the power back of all manifested life, infinitely great when you give yourself to it. That is where all things are done for you, where the crooked ways are made straight, where doors are opened and influences pass through to others without your knowing it. When you do this you carry a hidden virtue that you cannot measure nor even sense. Be careful about wasting time in what you call helping, for that can be dangerous. No, you lose what you have when you think you have a power; you lose it when you think you are an influence. If it is your good fortune to be an instrument so great and dynamic, you must, perforce, renounce all personal gratification in what materialists call “your inspiration” to others. All must be stern and strong and clean and free from the false valuations of sentimentality. Take the steps to your inner Self with the naked intent to worship Him in His holiness and all will be set in motion with beauty and order. That is all you can do and what you are needed to do. In this way, the doors open to let in light and you, too, are released when you are still and open your heart so that the Father can do the work.

To a racked and unhappy soul, the offer of such peace and immortal gladness seems a mockery, and yet that is the eternal challenge. It is also rebirth if the way is accepted, the birth of Christ within. Everyone of us has to find the humble stable, the lowly place of the dumb animals, and under our own bright star find the Christ and the gift of everlasting faith.

We who are facing a world of unleashed savagery must for our life’s sake plunge into the immortal living Presence, melt into that healing freedom from the world, that lies within. There, guarded by courage and humility, is the Christ, and going to that place of holiness and light is all that is asked of you.

When you reach this deep subjective realm through your desire, whether it be through physical love or the desire for spiritual attainment, it is in obedience to the same law. When physical love leaves the self-conscious state, then the deep subjective knowledge and wisdom take charge and new life is born. The spiritual desire for attainment goes through the same steps but the desire is stronger, for inherent in that desire is a knowledge of eternal life, and though it is quiet in its manifestations during the self-conscious period, once past the threshold, the deep subjective realm receives your idea, your desire, your prayer and it is given life and reality in due course. The birth through physical

love is but a primitive conception compared to the rebirth through thought and aspiration and prayer. The same process takes place but is a thousand times more swift than the first.

If, therefore, human love and birth are solemn, vital, mysterious, how much more so is the birth of thought, through desire always; and that desire is aroused by many things; pain, rebellion, suffering. Once the idea is truly conceived, the involuntary processes take charge and the rebirth is instant.

So be aware of the vitality of your thought, and it is vital, because it is the sum total of your character. When you rise and break through the mesh of ignorance the light of understanding clears the atmosphere around you and you see the star. The air is crystal and you behold the Child.

In this high purity because of a new sensitiveness, you will understand that your thoughts, your ideas, your resistance, your acceptances are organic, vital, and will always obey the law of conception and birth. You will realize that when you make a stand and say, "This is what I will think," you are reborn.

"The Word was made flesh, the Word was made flesh!"

Take the thought that leads you to the secret place of the Most High, but when you reach that place you can do nothing but worship, nothing but give yourself and all you desire to Infinite Love.

As never before, let all who serve Him at this time prepare the place for the birth of His Son, for the sake of the world, for the sake of those who sit in darkness. Adorn and praise and sing His glory for His light is everlasting and giveth peace.

Then, when all things were wrapped in deepest silence, to me was uttered the hidden Word.

This must you know also, that the soul hath inward freedom, and she cometh forth without help and without images, that God may freely unite Himself with her.

Meister Eckhart, 1260-1327

Letter 18

Be like a child; look at thy two feet and say, Lord, walk these for me. Talk to Him as to thy friend and nurse. Be in sweet common friendship with Him. Call Him in thy bath, in thy daily tasks, in thy going from one room to another. Say, Nay, I will not go alone. Come, be Thou with me, lead Thou the way. Behold, He will answer then, and come running like laughter and golden hope into thy heart, and with understanding love will He walk with thee from room to room. And, too, will He stand beside thee when thou faceth thy friends and visitors, and He will place a hand in thine and will watch thy heart and the issues therefrom so that thou canst talk in perfect safety knowing that thy word will be food and drink and life to all in thy presence.

For thou hast Him all to thyself. He is thine – forever. Do not puzzle how He can see thy two feet when there are millions of feet; that is too much for thine understanding. Enough that it is the truth that He hath never failed to come when called and that He will come as thou dost want Him. He is to be sought through the refinements of the heart. Go, then, and ask Him to rest thee, to heal thy complaints, and to fill thee with the strong virtue required. He will manifest; He never faileth. He is thy Saviour and sweet comforter. So go into thy immediate and personal life with Him for thy very own, with thy hand in His. Let Him smooth thy pillow, smooth thy blanket; and in deep, loosened sleep let Him teach thee that the Life immortal, perfect divine Sonship with Him, can be known in all its fullness by such a simple way as this childlike invitation to Him – the eternal Guest.

Be able to be alone. Lose not the advantage of solitude... but delight to be alone and single with Omnipresency... Life is a pure flame, and we live by an invisible sun within us.

Sir Thomas Browne, 1605-1682

Letter 19

There is a divine illumination from earthly things that will bring great joy and heavenly release to you if seen through the pure eyes of the Spirit; when you bathe, when you eat, when you walk, when you sleep – these are great symbols and are holy. When you work changing the unseen into maintenance (which you do when you use your mind to earn your bread), be holy by pouring the light upon humble ordinary things, for thus will you be transfigured and your day be blessed to you. Also it is one way to overcome the world which can be made a constant sacrament. Have more joy in your daily life, for renouncing the world is first of all to have a greater zest for things infinite than things finite. The idea of renouncing joy is destructive; have greater joy, but be sure the source of it is within rather than without – and, lest you be misled, that simply means to be more aware of Him you worship while you play, for He abides in a lifted heart. He overcame the world; put the world, therefore, at his feet. Sometimes in the past, you have gone across the no-man's-land we have talked about for inspiration and then you have left it behind you and have stood in your workaday world and expected to get results for your workaday spirit. No! Results may come that way, but slowly, inadequately. Your direct action is when you go back to your world charged and supercharged and stay charged. I have spoken at length on this for it is time you were more awake to your own power within. Go, therefore, plunge, experiment, do it gaily; nothing is too simple, too tiny. Go and move mountains and awake! The outward thrust of faith is your stand.

Letter 20

Hold the pearl of great price, hold the talisman – believing. The secret lies in the reality of the power of this shining faith. Rest on it as you would on the arm of a strong friend, realizing its actuality. As fear attracts evil events, so doth faith attract good events. An act of faith is no idle thing; it is the first step.

Dissolve everything to a fiery thought, a thought of fiery faith. When fears of defeat come, burn them up so that not for an instant can they take hold. You can do everything by being there first.

Do not waste too much thought looking into yourselves wondering what you ought to do; keep a “naked intent” toward God; keep one-pointed in your advance into the seeming chaos and darkness of the world. It makes for the capacity of loving stillness; it makes the temple of the bosom hold the Spirit more adequately; it makes for gentle holiness, comfort and protection, stillness and softness, that you may stand strong and alert. Those to whom this is revealed are the lonely, but like the mountaintop, lonely in the clouds; the air is pure.

Be patient, be patient, don't fret – leave that to the little. Do not be afraid of standing to your full measurement, that inward measurement you know so well. And yet do not try to be perfect; that is a paradox, but too much effort is a delayer. Be gentle with yourself; you cannot storm the kingdom, for those who feel the weight are heavy burdened... that is the first stage.

And yet again, be soft with everyone but yourself; it is a fine tonic, good iron for the blood. This is but a hint – a little bit of good salt for the sauce.

At this time when events come thick and fast, do not linger emotionally on sights and sounds and rumors. Accept them as facts and leave them. Even in battle when our best friends fell beside us, we saluted and passed on. So it is with you in this great battle; do what you can but remember that your constant fight is to keep your holy stillness high above the din. Hold it – and however much there is thunder and darkness and you are appalled by multiplying dangers, even if they advance in terrifying hosts, hold and advance! Then this stillness, illuminated, will come into your lives on this earth and great peace and goodness and glory and beauty will be your adventure. It is right that you attack; always advance keeping your fighting edge outside you. But from within fill your bosom with light and high inspiration, for then is the kingdom of heaven brought down into your material world. It takes courage; therefore take courage and give it!

The things we cherish most are at the mercy of the things we cherish least.

William James, 1842-1910

Love, and do what you like.

St. Augustine

Letter 21

We all know that the human you is contrary; it is the way the animal is made, for man is always contrary to his inner Self, and the problem is to melt these two into one so that there is not conflict. There may be help in taking a sort of lazy lying-in-the-sun attitude when caring too much about people, material things, injustice and meanness.

When tempted to emotional upheaval, say, "Hold; this is too good to waste on little things; I will put it into vigor or discipline." So many tired people are enraged by the little things in life and use heavy artillery when a word would do. Great forces are in you; do not let them loose in any other way at this time, than to make them build your holy temple. Remember how you were told of the delicacy of thought; when you harden in human irritation, you use too much power on unimportant things. Therefore keep yourself in practice on little things, for that steaming and straining over stupidities is not worth the emotion spent on them. Save this mighty power to keep yourself where your life will be renewed, balanced, rested and fortified.

It is difficult not to be subject to the enraging fires of personalities, but personalities are only states. You will find some arid, some boiling, some terrifying, some evil, and when you meet or even talk of one, you can turn on a destructive force which, though you soon forget it, is very tiring in result. It is so easy to be put off your guard; watch others and notice how the appetite for anger and critical resentment poisons their thoughts.

What I am trying to tell you is that the beauty you seek is so easy to find, but is only found by being always on guard, not being tempted off it an instant. No; smile and walk with easy confidence among all sorts of states of consciousness and be so illumined from within that they too will become purified. These contacts cannot stain nor tire nor block you. Oh, my dear child, it is such a wonderful way to find rest! Practice on little things and little people and you will see how immediate will be your release – your release from what is called "the weary world". Laugh and shine on them impersonally and you will see the coming of a light so clear it will be as if until then you had only peered through foggy mists.

Be secretly aware and restfully industrious in keeping your thoughts in that place where the air is as bright as fine glass or pools in marble basins – where beauty is transcendent. It is a place where there is no longing; that is the tenderness mixed in the amazement, for here hope is fulfilled. Stay then in this stillness so heavenly that the poets can only reach it in high lonely moments. Keep in this place, for the tender and the great moments which have lifted you far above dull realities are all here; honor and bright hopes are here; true courage is here. Do not be fearful ever, but rather abide where you will be given those things that will protect you.

The way, then, is to still the conflict between your inner and outer selves, to join hands and present yourself before Him, that you may rise to your true stature in His Presence; here all strain and effort and contrariness will pass away like running shadows. Do not worry and allow your thoughts to swell into heavy mountains, but keep in this place and let the details of your life resolve. Not to fret over nonessentials when one can breathe a cool strong air, is what is meant.

And remember, never knit your brow; keep it holy!

For crooked thoughts separate from God.

Wisdom of Solomon

Letter 22

It may seem strange to you that you must be weak to be strong, that you gather the power invincible from the small elusive secret fountain within, which can only be found through thought. It is elusive because though it is there, eternal, it does not press; it must be sought; and there are so many things that delay the seeker. It is indeed a pilgrim's process. But be of good cheer, much has already fallen away from you that is dross, and you feel a certain freedom from fear, and you sense your divine protection. Accept your responsibilities gaily, happily. Take these disciplines that you set up for yourselves like a happy game, for it can be most joyful. Soon you will discover that when you are in it – this game – you are all right, and when you are out of it you are all wrong. Therefore employ every method you can to be near the fountain, and the reward will be your deeper enjoyment of life. That is the testimony that has come down from the saints.

If you examine history and the lives of those you admire, you will find they all held to an unseen confidence; something, as they would say, came out of the depths to their rescue when everything was against them and they were challenged by despair, defeat and delay. You cannot judge anything on the outside, nor analyze the struggle while you are in it. Out of the past has come great wisdom for those who can hear – and everyone now is challenged by iron events. You may ask, “How can we deal with the situation if we cannot understand it from the outside or analyze it when it is here?” Largely by feeling. You cannot analyze a feeling of faith when all is against a leader, that spark that turned the tides of men; that unshakable serenity of one who calm yet vigilant, held to the unseen, heard the voice of the Comforter and found inward strength. That is all we can do for you – give you friendly assurances of its reality – “yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow”: that is the essence of all we can be to you. But do not be dismayed; you are safe as long as you hold. A great fire is burning. See that there is no dross about you, and you will come through

unscathed. Life has always been dangerous, and no one is spared the conflict within himself, though a joyful courage attracts a joyful life.

The defense of your inward realm must be taken by guardian thoughts, the guardian thoughts that will surround your inner source; then you will not need to worry so much about the outward details; meet them as they come, inspirationally. Lift your spirits high and be undismayed by the scenery! You cannot add one cubit to your inspiration, but you can protect it. Bend every energy of mind to that purpose; lift it high; make a gallant surrender of your whole existence to lifting the light of your inspiration into every act, into your bodies, into your minds. Be illumined through and through. Consider yourself a magnifying glass through which all your thoughts and experiences are one-pointed, and your inspiration from within will concentrate into a burning point. That is being strong. *Such august faith restores the instant.* You are a son of God – go forth! It is true that your outer you sits down like Peter and weeps and denies. It is true that your crown becomes heavy, and your shield of great weight and the sword slips your hand from too much dwelling in the world, which is ignorant and fearful and darkening and ready to steal your garment of immortality. No! Concentrate on your inward light, and to such magnitude will it grow that the crown will rest lightly, the shield will take a lifting of its own, and the sword will shine in your hand.

This is the burning up of the dross – turning every impulse to this heroic stand.

Letter 23

These are iron times for the nations. Be all the more disciplined in your emotions, for you will hear cries of fear and the cowards will try to force you into their quaking cul-de-sacs. No, be ready for their poison and their unpreparedness. It is the time to hammer out the metal of your shining armor. Remember you are of the rank of the shock troops, without fear, dismay or self-indulgence. Watch, then, all appetites and ponder them carefully. This is important; nothing is too small, too subtle, too tiny. When big events are cutting the air like scimitars, it is well not to have indulgence; see and watch with vigilance the little enemies.

Again as an old soldier, I say, attack without effort the idea of happiness. Insist on it, demand it, fill your body with happiness like good strong wine, for from the beauty of a lifted heart come the joyful issues of life. Now is the time to rise up and tambour your Spirit with drumsticks of joy! So will you drum yourselves free that you may not go down before unbelief. Unbeliefs are of your own making; that is hard to grasp, but the time will come when we can look back together and laugh. The way to freedom is to have freedom in the thoughts of your head, and at this hour, when all about are most materially inclined, it is good to be aware.

As for this idea of happiness do not misunderstand me; it is the joy of courage which brings the faith to win. Let in the rays and beams to every situation, for such is the kingdom of light. March bravely with the brave; demand this joy, this morale, for with immortality on your banners, and happiness in your trumpets, you will march on together into such a brightness it is as if the sun came down to join you on your road.

*In the deserts of the heart
Let the healing fountain start...*

W. H. Auden, 1907-1973

Letter 24

I have much sympathy for you for I know what it is when it seems as if you were wrapped in heavy blankets so that you cannot move – the blankets of inertia, of cold fear and apprehension; blankets of melancholy. And when you make the effort to throw them off for an intake of spiritual inspiration, they are suddenly tighter than ever, so tight that the mind is also blanketed.

In times like these one is lifted up to high resolution and then dropped back to irresolution and uncertainty. Pinpricks of events, personalities pressing in from all sides are magnified. Indeed it is hard to remember your Creator in your human life! So often it is said that it is important to face realities; but it is hard to know what is real and what is beyond real... one cannot see the forest for the trees. We can only repeat what we have said before; your only reality is your inward at-one-ment with the Spirit within you. You touch it, you lose it to find it again, to forget it. And yet your desire for the companionship of the Spirit has grown so that you are aware of the protection and bounty of the Almighty and that you are guided and given strength again to meet the challenges which seem so stupid and unfair.

Human life is beset with challenges; it is true of any form of discipline. You will always be in conflict with the material world; you are always bringing order out of chaos all through your day. As we have told you before, your will to win is an important part of your spiritual armor, for it goes with faith always. Through practice you are gaining more skill to play the game within-without. The without is easier because you see the play. Within is more difficult because your lacks, such as moral weaknesses, inertias, are not revealed and are often unrecognized when you see them, as it were, dramatized in ultimate action on the outside.

You know that this way of life, these communions calling for spiritual aid, is the only reality, and as you push away the heavy blankets of indifference, of old habits and weaknesses, you will find refreshment in your freedom. You will become more sensitive to instructions and you will obey them. We know that the still small voice is there to be heard and we know that every excuse is made not to find the time to listen to it. Remember in your hours of living in the world that your salvation is in the impulse to obey, the faithfulness of response to the delicate instruction. In this lies character and surely the beginning and end of our collaboration is the development of character.

Step back into this holy, immaterial, deathless, timeless quietness. At times it is unbelievable that there is a serenity guiding you, healing and sustaining, and yet this is the only way to free yourselves. Say, "I will first seek the kingdom within me"; then you *can* be still, you *can* be serene, you *can* carry a cloudless sky into a frantic emotional day full of upsetting events through this obedience to the counsel you hear which comes in the sense of awareness, of peace and knowledge that your Redeemer liveth and is with you. Through Him you can be a conqueror and work miracles. Work them!

Through want of strength I have gone to the wrong shore. Thirst came upon thy worshipper, though he stood in the midst of the waters; have mercy!

Vedic Prayer

Letter 25

Do you not see that you have come to the place where it is wise to practice all the time bringing the Spirit into the roughage of daily life? Can you understand it better if you say to yourselves, "By doing this I am overcoming the world"? That is, your world.

Necessity sometimes brings you to your feet; do not wait for necessity; be there first. Say, "I know that you will give me my daily bread, I know that you will guide me in the way of wisdom, I know that you will release me from the terror by night" ... the pressure of material existence.

Do you ask, "Why am I chosen for this release?" You are not chosen, you chose and called; called to yourselves this freedom from the laws of negative consequences by abiding in the cause, the source, the Holy Spirit. You can demonstrate a working principle. To be sure you have failed, blundered, daydreamed and got lost in thickest and sloughs of despond and forgetfulness like anyone else, but you have a peculiar and individual instinct for beauty, the beauty of spiritual things, and you have sensed that you can walk into the dawning of a new day. Eternal love walks with anyone intent upon this adventure, and the daily miracle comes when you can hold what you receive and

do not permit it to become dissipated by your senses and the talks and alarms of self-conscious life. Go forth then, and overcome your own immediate world.

Sometimes you are bewildered, for there seems so much to be done and you cannot see the forest for the trees; it is difficult, for your minds are not yet trained to realization, realization in the sense of involuntary awareness of the constant Presence. For that reason, what is asked of you seems difficult to the material mind; it is not that you should make a cowardly escape from realities, it is that you should fill yourselves with a calmness not your own making, *that you become a channel* for it to flow through.

When you examine your inner human selves, you find they are tornadoes, volcanoes of feeling ready without warning to ravage the world around you. With the growing consciousness of the Spirit, that feeling will be transmuted, for it must be renounced, changed. This sounds as if you had to go through a sort of exercise, but reread about bringing the well-filled water jars across no-man's-land from the well of life, and you will see it is not quite that. The world is too much with you. You would have more power over it if you could perceive that the shock of the world with its vital interest and absorbing drama makes the mind race and the emotions tense. Those who desire to overcome it must step back and let the mind be washed clean and the emotions put in order. This to some may sound an impossible task, but is infinitely easier than suffering the consequences of the human way.

One of you said, "I am tired of being brave!" Say it no more, for that is the negation of all that has been revealed to you. Courage enfolds you with wings; it is calm and protecting; it lifts you over rough places and is the victory of the Spirit over the material world.

Another has said, "There is a human limit to what a body can do!" Of course that is so, but you can find great help sometimes by realizing your own inner strength. In the midst of fatigue and exhaustion many have been lifted to their feet by the clearness of their thought. Much of sickness is psychic and is the heaviness of materialism.

You say you are rebellious because you cannot do more. You asked how nature could show you. Consider the delicacy of the beginnings of things and how they must be nurtured; it is the same with your revelation and the way it must be nurtured. You plant a seed as you were prompted to do, for concepts and thoughts are seeds and grow much faster than nature. The weed-thoughts wither into dust instantly when you seek the quiet communions of your inner stillness; they are in the soil of illusion and have no power when you are free.

Be not troubled too much by the hobgoblins of the imagination; that is a useless burden. The reality is enough to bear without adding the unreality. The blanking out, the forgetfulness after renewal, is what must be avoided; and yet it is not a question of duty; you must not blame yourselves for it is hard for the human mind and character not to stew in its own juice! Human nature is stubborn, lazy, somnolent. Step forth into the brightness of spiritual vigor!

Believe steadily, the long belief; look danger in the face and do not quail. Many ask that God come down to guide you – do your part, stand up, go up, realize your majesty; and in the deep security of your silence, realize the godhood that is yours when you are one with the Father.

There is no wall like an idea.

Emerson's *Journal*

Letter 26

In our searching for the way, sometimes one mood is more helpful than another, and here is a very childlike one for the tired spirits.

As a child, when you were pushed ahead by your nurse or your mother, you had a spacious open faith; a knowledge that you were being safely guided through the unknown. Try today to recapture a feeling only half remembered deep within your place of memory, and in your imagination lie back in confidence and face the future with an open heart, knowing that the Presence who is guiding you is good, loving, protecting.

When the moment for action comes, there will, of course, be much for you to do; but because of these moments of rest, you will hear better when you are told what to do and how to do it.

Give out love; give royally of it, but keep silent. Build a thick area about yourself of a shock-absorbing substance; make an image of protection that will neutralize the natural alarms that you may be called upon to experience. This is first aid. Laugh and be merry, for that is healing to those about you who despair. Be humble and human and tender; be selfless and patient with the forgiveness that permits you to go up to the altar; be simple. In fact be the child pushed ahead, having the knowledge that you are in safekeeping, in loving hands.

If you can live like this in the midst of everyday confusion, then you have nothing to fear. Fast and pray; keep in this core of light within your within-ness and you will be free from dread and ache and fear. Fast in thy mind; pray by accepting the joy of God and keep within where he abides. Go thy way, blest, being wheeled before the Holy Company!

Letter 27

Today let us write down this prayer: "O Holy Spirit within me, hold me in Thy gentleness which gives me strength. Keep me from the strain that takes me far from Thee, keep me in Thy radiant presence. Keep me awake that the sleep of forgetfulness may not shut Thee from me; remind me of my immortality now. I know that I am in Thy love; keep me illumined and untarnished. Teach me to play my part."

In times like these we cannot go out into the world without the armor of God, and the only way we can wear it is to keep our minds clothed in the idea of Him all the day long. Let the Spirit within do the thinking, the talking, the listening. Stand back and let It guide your feet; you are never alone, and the light within can be a comfort in the darkness to others. No word need be spoken and sometimes, perhaps many times, we feel only confusion and the limitations of our own personalities to such an extent that we doubt the reality of the power within; but if the "naked intent" is there, its light is felt without any effort on our part and sometimes without the conscious awareness of others. "Of myself I can do nothing," the Father dwelling within lives and works in me if I teether my mind to Him even ever so little. And today everyone has a great obligation to keep aware faithful to the creative Power.

And here is a prayer for emergency when alarms strike with the force of a blow and you are tempted to put faith in your antagonist:

"I am on duty; Thy hand I feel upon my shoulder. Let Thy peace flow through my heart to all about me. I know Thou livest and though I cannot see the working of the divine plan, I know that my being on duty is part of the resurrection and the awakening that is to come. Here I am, aware of Thy Presence, Thy love, Thy goodness. I know I have immortality now, in this life, that Thou hast placed the shield of faith upon my arm, the sword of the Spirit in my hand, the spurs of resolution and action upon my feet. I therefore dedicate myself in this hour of seeming despair, to faith, to joy and to the knowledge that I am alive in Thee. I will resolve not to quail, nor to dwell in idle foreboding. I dedicate myself to holding the portals of my heart wide open that I may be a channel for Thy Spirit. I dedicate every living hour to this resolve, to Thy service. I trust in Thee; I am on duty."

Some exercise themselves in many commendable practices and perform many acts of virtue... This is well enough for beginners, but it belongs to a far higher perfection to follow the interior attraction of the Holy Spirit and be guided by His direction.

Louis Lallement, 1587-1635

Religion is not a melancholy, the spirit of God is not a dampe!

John Donne, 1573-1631

Letter 28

After realizing the consequences of involuntary *un*-self-control you will perhaps know better the meaning of voluntary self-control. We all know how thoughts seize and shake us, involuntarily stealing in through the cracks in our armor, and that is why it is so important to have your inward area filled with light so that fearful thoughts cannot bear the sight and cannot find lodging space. When you are weak and the walls of your fortress are of paper upon which memory has morbidly written the mistakes of the past, how easily are they torn so that false alarms sweep through to your vitals! And how they call in the whole ghoulish family to live upon your fears. It is man's task to keep his inward self clean and luminous, radiant and aware. As eternal vigilance is the price of liberty how much more is the price of spiritual victory; how important is living day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment.

Great power will be given only where great power is generated.

When you live with the great forces that beat your heart, and work through the involuntary activities of the body, you are given assurance because of your rejection of weakening terrors, and you find immediate response in health and wisdom in your daily life. More and more will you realize the relief throughout your nervous system, and the organization of your body will collaborate and assist you in generating the spirit of victory, of "dominion over all your earth-consciousness". It is true that only the brave deserve the fair; *only the aware deserve the Spirit*.

As you desire to live spiritually, to be safeguarded, given health, simple goodness, peace of mind, and knowledge to deal with the circumstances of your life, you must come to this conclusion – I will discipline myself.

If you were asked to help a youth on his way, you would guard him with constant watchfulness. Look upon yourself and see how much watching you need. Humans are so constituted that even while they are professing an intent toward a spiritual way of life, they are delayed by moods, negative emotions of criticism, prejudice and self-justification as well as the daily assaults upon the mind by gossip, letters, and all the stinging gnats of daily contacts. It seems as if they were constantly setting up ninepins which are not allowed to stand in peace; the ninepins of ordered thinking are knocked over while they are being set up.

From a practical point of view it seems a difficult thing for man to do, this being continually aware of something almost unknown within himself, for man needs something to play with, and it is easier for him to love a dog, a child, a woman, than the Light within which he cannot see. He is asked to love a thing imagined, at first, until it becomes the greatest reality, and that is a task indeed.

I cannot show you God, nor yourself in your illumined state. But you will grow to feel Him and to turn within for healing comfort. Spiritual things can only be spiritually discerned. Desperate need and your imagination tell you why, so that you instinctively seek until the feeling, the answer comes. Through this invisible feeling-nature, you are given a change of heart, and you can be assured that because of your love for what you have experienced in these moments of oneness with Him, your imagination and reason will tell you that this came from an inner you, an inner light, an inner love – an inner Love!

Through love and remembrance of Him, as you live minute by minute, turn your eye inward when there is a pause, whenever you are at a street corner waiting to cross, when you bathe; when you clothe your body, wash away the grimy thoughts, brush away the grimy thoughts, brush away the unspoken ignorance. During your morning preparations, do not let your mind rattle with the thoughts of the day ahead. Clothe yourself so that you will contain, within, this love that supplies the Light, and when there is a pause in your work, when a clock strikes the hour, say these words: “I stand in light. No foolish thoughts, no foreboding, no false imagery, no terror can come near this Light within me, for I love it and serve it and I stand here purified, dedicated to honor, to health of mind and body, to peace of mind and life everlasting.”

This, my children, is a prescription needed in these times of chaotic thinking, and you will find if you obey this spiritual desire you will be led in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake, and you will know the joy of involuntary self-control. During your times of quiet, those lovely moments, pools of restoration where you drink deep of the waters of spiritual health, learn to discipline yourselves. Not with the fist, for that soon tires; nor with the mind, for that is forgetful; but with the heart. Love will keep you there. Love is vigilant; it is quieting; it is your gently strong awareness; it is the oil of joy that supplies the Light.

Do this in remembrance of Him, for He is the Light within.

Put all sadness from thee, for it is the sister of doubt and anger. It is the most mischievous of all spirits and the worst to the servants of God. Learn now, O unwise man! How it troubleth the Holy Spirit; remove therefore sadness from thyself, and afflict not the Holy Spirit which dwelleth within thee.

The Shepherd of Hermas, A.D. 142-157

Letter 29

Let us use imagery. Once there was a white bird with a blue bill and orange feet; it was neatly plumed and took joy in flying over waves. This bird was of the sea and lived in the far north certain seasons, and in flight took long journeys across continents to the cold again. When buffeted by winds it followed its unerring instinct, rose high, straightened its wings and held to its course in safety, clear of all danger. It flew above company air currents, high and over great violences, held and protected by the instinct inherent within it.

So it is with the soul that is controlled by the self-conscious realization of its relation to the power of the Spirit in which it abides.

The symbol of the bird suspended in horizontal flight, high above the tumults, the challenging fears and unreasonable panics, applies to times like these. Dark thoughts try to reach up and drag the bird from the sky, for it is the constant conflict between the outer and inner you. You have surely arrived at the place where you can in wisdom know that there is a balance that can be kept, a high air of safety that you can seek where you are protected from the wastage of false alarms that gather to form a cloud. Spread your wings to the upcurrent and rise high above, serene and confident in that power which holds you in that high altitude; fly over in a sky free from all danger, in the safekeeping of your true direction, of the knowledge of it, the instinct for it, in the desire for the manifestation in your life and the love of God.

Be the winged Word and fear nothing! Then will you be in the very center of the concept, divine instinct made manifest, which is revealed in light, in swift action, in order and balance, in protection and beauty.

You have the choice of this clear high impersonal yet loving space, or the storms of human existence. Spread your wings straight and catch the first morning breeze of divine promise and hope, and be lifted into that high place where, freed from the clutching of circumstance you can with a great heart give strength and surcease to those you love, to the world; for you have asked to be humble messengers of the Lord Jesus. In obedience to his commands your protection lies.

As a humble child, fearful and weary, do not sit down in dismay upon the unsure ground of apprehension, but take your Spirit and spread it forth like the wings of the bird and let it rise high and clear into the shining sun of faith; let your Spirit take wing and of a surety it will carry strength and hope into the farthest reaches of your human life.

Fly high, for thus it is that one rises from dead thoughts into immortality.

Somewhere within our life is a standard as invisible as the equator, as relentless as the seasons.

P. H. Elliot

Letter 30

In these times you cannot afford to meet the shock of life with emotion; you cannot hate, you cannot fear. The evil that you see has always been here; the ignorance is not for you to judge, nor can you respond to it even in the sense of so-called righteous indignation. We have tried to teach you that you must defend yourselves with the knowledge you have received from this way of life, so that you will not be dragged down into an emotional maelstrom of dark imaginings. True creative sympathy does not throw one into the darkness of another's life. Stand in the light that has been revealed to you by your communion with him who said, "My joy I give unto thee", and by so doing help to illumine the one in need. Divine wisdom is the antithesis of violence and despair; therefore if you have tendencies, like appetites, to strain and boil, to daydream, to *think black* in deep negations, you but add to the ignorance and are enslaved by it. What holds the race back but fear thoughts, greed thoughts, self-thoughts, which are of the race? ... this strange subtle pride of race! They take so many shapes; that is why one must be forever vigilant, forever remembering, forever holding oneself to the center and letting the indwelling Spirit take possession that it may fill your life to the uttermost with the realization that this infinite Presence of the Spirit is actually present, is the actual stuff of love and peace and power. And when you find yourselves pressed hard, say: "I will not take in, I will give out; I will not in darkness dwell, light shall be my life. I will cleanse me and I shall go forth forgiving all things, knowing that this love will resolve all things and my way will be made straight, and I shall knock and it shall be opened unto me, and I shall find and receive."

Keep awake in the victory of the Spirit; pour out thanksgiving before there is a sign of victory; thank the Father for the event before it happens; cleanse your hearts of all prejudices and the impotent rage against nations and nationalities and all the hot emotions that boil in the hell of personality.

Keep rather in that secret place where emotion is transmuted and the human spirit is lifted by the swift transmutation. A time will come when by your steadfast voluntary discipline of the pressures of actualities and the realities of your outer world, you will be aware of the involuntary transmutation which comes quietly as a reward for your intent and desire... your desire above all others to know Him in your everyday world, to know eternal life now.

Fight on, brave ones, and cast off the heavy vestments with despair in their folds! Put on the garments of immortality; be worthy, keep yourselves shriven, be stern with no one but yourselves, and do not go this way from a sense of duty, but for the fulfillment of Joy!

An interior man will make more impressions on hearts by a single word animated by the spirit of God, than another by a whole discourse which has cost him much labor and in which he has exhausted all his power of reasoning.

Louis Lallement, 1587-1635

Letter 31

Hold, hold as you have never done before. Watch each word and mood, beware of scattering and spilling; do anything – fall flat on the floor and wait till your valiant soul lifts you to your feet. Be ashamed of quailing. No, no! It is easy to see this great fear gripping and squeezing men into dwarfs, but, oh my children, do not get caught in the feeling of the sick. Now is the appointed time. Hold. Do things to remind you to stay where you belong, tie knots on your fingers, put things up, hang them about so that you may train your foolish heads to remember your Creator now, and so give life to your world. I tell you in no uncertain words that what you actually think now holds your world together. One wrong evil thought coming into your galaxies (of thoughts) could sweep everything you see into Timbuctoo. Your only safety is to be within the center of your kingdom, living from within out, not from without in. Be there all the time, no compromise. You will find that it is glorious fun, and easier to be men than fearful pygmies in dark jungles, chased by wild animals – slaves to nature.

There are armies wedged behind you; lead them! They will strengthen you.

If you could for one hour be with your divine Self – that is, your outer you and your inner you together in the Presence of God – you would change the whole mood of our generation, so powerful is this light.

Try; hold nations in the palms of your hands and shine on them. The big and the little, the little and the big – there is no scale.

Walk with the great ones. Keep the vigil.

Letter 32

It is true, you cannot for a moment be fearful; it is not the role for a soldier. Attack without fear and you will be given courage for each fraction of a moment. Courage is what will steady you; you need to bite into courage and hold tight; then you will be free from the drill sergeant of discipline. Only the fearful are disciplined; keep far ahead of your fears, then you will be calm, protected and completely safe. Only the confident are quiet and full of success; only they can poke out their tongues at the drill sergeant who is so full of wind. Courage is a matter of *élan*. When again in the battle smoke where all things swell big to frighten the child in you, take out your little drum and beat it hard, and armies of heroes will gallop with the glint of eternal valor on their helmets, for is not an eternal truth that a child shall lead them?

Brave men are childlike.

By prayer I do not mean any bodily exercise of the outward man, but the going forth of the spirit towards the Fountain of Life... The natural tendency of the poor, rent, derived spirit towards the Fountain of Spirits... To retire inwardly and wait to feel somewhat of the Lord.

Isaac Penington, 1617

Letter 33

It is wise to keep spiritually ahead of the times; keep in the ultimate and fear not! If you can do this, you will not be dated and have to go through certain stages of discipline. Not discipline so much as consequences, lessons.

Much has been said of the necessity to get into the thick of life, to “know it in the raw”. But that one is fortunate indeed who can stand away from it with such detachment that he can see the weaving patterns, he can escape many knots and tangles; and, too, his critical faculty becomes kinder. There are many ways of learning the same lesson, but shall we not listen to the comfort in the words, “Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for my way is easy and my burden is light”, and is it not the moment to ponder on the inner meaning of “to know God is eternal life”? If we could do more than perceive the truth in these words, we would enter now into deathless beauty, timelessness, our immortality.

One of the beneficent gifts of this, your chosen action, this communion with the Spirit, is an escape from many states that savage and ignorant men are heirs to. All that is asked of you is to practice the secret way and see the unfoldment.

When challenged by terror, always attack in spiritual action, for in this attack, this action, is your only rest. Attack the first suggestion of fear; how? Try such words as these; say, "Lord, lead Thou the way! Lord, I would be Thy messenger and as Thy messenger I will obey Thy words. I will be true, I will be one with Thee, I will not surrender to the negative forces, I will not be fearful of the sea of entangling angry emotions. I will step forward following Thee, for in so doing I will gather immortal strength. Lord, here I am."

By such a stand of spiritual manhood, you will be released from entanglements which you have magnified. Magnify instead the omniscient, the august and mighty power you have within you.

We have told you that your inner you walks in the power of God; you will receive a faint realization of that mightiness by an act of complete faith, a surrender to the holy stillness.

In these days when time presses and seems to matter so much, perhaps you will be willing to listen to some of the ancient wisdom from an old man.

First, there is an incorruptible *now*.

In broad daylight, eyes wide open, looking at a house, a street, a hill or a common scene of every day – look at your picture with its tendency to stir up trains of thought, of memory, of anxiety, and dissolve it to the eternal moment while you look. That the house grows old, the leaves fall from the tree, that spring comes to renew the world, is not for you to be dismayed about.

No, the eternal moment which is part of your godhood, futureless, without past, gives more beauty to the scene because you are there and yet – are not there! You are in truth and not deceived; you are in pure joy and not made tragic by your thoughts of comparison; you are in peace and not in turmoil.

This is a secret of great value for it will give you spiritual stamina, freedom from regret, and will hold you to your true stature.

... What better way to meet conditions than with a timeless courage steadying your heartbeats, inspiring with eternal inspiration your every act? It is as if you took this thing called fear and in its place, fitting perfectly, you placed pure courage. Let us examine this thing called courage. True courage, spiritual courage, is without strain, is relaxed; it is a state not ruffled; it is an outpouring steadiness; it is strong, confident, without effort, a calm benediction – for it comes from within. We are concerned with keeping you at your full spiritual stature, for by being there you will be eternally safe.

... I would like to add a word, for I know you may think that when you hear these things on a headachy, distracted day, they seem very far removed from your instant, unsolved, and nagging problem. Well, it is not impersonal or cold. See it as the figure of Christ, for he is eternally now, eternally fresh. He is the divine principle. Keep always invisible in the stillness of his invisible

presence. You say this is hard? It is not hard! It is a loving awareness; not being blotted out for hours at a time in nothingness. It is not as difficult as being a good student or a laborer in the fields. Instead of falling into the sleep of oblivion that steals away the precious moments, you abide in that beautiful awareness that keeps the instant flaming, alive with joy and peace.

... And he shall find all that he can ask, and that as deep as the mind of man is able to reach.

Jacob Boehme, 1575-1624

Letter 34

As the unseen in you is held is held captive by the senses, so are you a prisoner. The loneliness, the loneliness, the loneliness, which is the lot of all who wonder! Those you see about you are ensnared by the noise, the color, the interest of other souls like yourself; they gather together to do away with this loneliness; all these souls, like yours, are seeking release in affairs, in personal experiences; sharing what you call gossip, feelings of patriotism, or endeavor, of art – all so far away from the lonely reality of God. It is as if in a multitude of marching men going with hands, banners and tumult, interested vitally, emotionally in comradeship with one idea to achieve, you turned about right-face and walked back; this is why the road to God is so difficult.

I have heard you ask why it is you forget in the midst of knowing? How it is that you cannot keep yourself in the Presence? How, when you step out of your bed, you are assailed with armies of thoughts and vain imaginings for your busy day ahead? Then you assail and wound yourself with the blows of the daily news and with hurried spirit you go out to your appointed task. “Will this happen? Can I move *this* about?” Things not done delay your plans; stupidities block and anger the Spirit, disappointments, sudden hopes, in fact, all the excitement of the day’s achievement has kept you far away and made you shallow. Why do I dare say that you are made shallow? Because you are living way out there on the fringes of yourself, even outside of your lines of defense.

Now let me show you how you can meet your day.

On waking, wake in joy and plunge yourself into great stillness. Dissolve your universe into thought. Then meet the news, meet the onslaught as if it were the barking of a pack of dogs far away outside of this still park of your estate. Carry this stillness of serene sky, quiet pools, and transcendent beauty with you. Step into the hard reality, and you will find that you can see through it instantly when it has been resolved into thought.

The temptations to anger on account of a stupidity, a challenging personality, a shock or disappointment, and all the heavy awkward conflicts are present, but they shrink into their natural and relative places in the divine scheme. They are mere shadows in the beauty of your scene. See through them, past them; they have challenged but not disturbed your eternal serenity. You are living far, far in the future. What you see is the past; oh my eternal children, this is the way, the truth and the life! This is no idle panacea, this communion, brought to comfort you with ephemeral comfort. No, this is what you asked for; like Moses you struck a rock. It is no idle word, neither is it meaningless that God is power transcendent, and omniscient. Sitting, walking, eating, sleeping, waking with this splendor in your heart, this still Presence will give you complete majestic dominion over all mankind – that disturbing mankind within yourself. If you ask for this it will come like the waters of life from outer and inner darkness. It is clean and still and far and wide and high and deep; it is glorious beyond the feeling of rejoicing.

Wake, then, little, perturbed, anxious, weary, frightened children, and stand released in this holy stillness; then will the picture be fulfilled. Results follow after. Be in a place which brings results.

Now as you have turned against the marching multitude, when you awake each day in renewed confidence, you will find that you will not forget so quickly. You will not be snuffed out, nor blanketed, nor turned to salt by events, disappointments, turmoil, news. No! You will find that this is a principle which quiets the Spirit, relaxes the step, enlarges the heart and everywhere brings tidings of great joy. Be therefore Knights of the Holy Grail sanctified, purified and dedicated. Your sincerity is known, your foibles are known, the inner wishes of your heart are known. Resolve; marshal your will and your intent, find your purpose and your directions; then will you be sustained and comforted and reminded of the Presence in this holy place.

I was a humble servant; I was a humble voice, I was a coward, and out of hell and torture I was lifted by a thought into this eternal stillness of love and light and power and joy and knowledge and truth.

This kind of knowledge is a thing that comes in a moment like a light kindled from a leaping spark which, once it has reached the soul, finds its own fuel.

Plato, 428 B.C.

Letter 35

When you first came to these communions with all the fresh enthusiasm of beginners, we knew that though your hearts were good you could not realize, except for brief moments, the majesty and splendor as the gates were opened before you and you were made free. You would forget and be drawn back, closed in and swept away into what you considered reality, and all the alarms and terrors and hurts of your human life would again press close. That which had been awakened in you would then bring you again to seek the reassurance and comfort of the revealing Spirit which only speaks in the silence of the “sovereign shining darkness”, and each time of your return you were uplifted and through this heavy flesh you felt the freedom. O earth enshrouded, O pain-imprisoned mortals, while you have the pearl of great price in your hands, you look away like distracted children!

In the compelling interest, tenseness and drama on this difficult journey even the assurance and peace are forgotten. This is understandable, for the growth is slow and often you feel far away from the light. The doors seemed locked and closed to you, and you become earthbound again, chained to old habits of thought and action. In spite of this, you know that when you come into the presence of the living Spirit, then there are no locked imprisoning barriers. When you leave, waiting for you, ready to sweep in on you, are the racing material thoughts where your minds seem, at present, more at home; even with what you may call the practical strains and needs of life that bring sudden tension when you return to them. We tell you that the path is not flinty, not dangerous, except for your thinking.

Come, and bring your thoughts where they can be held true, so that you can realize how you are held, supported, sustained and protected. This is your safety – your thought, and that thought is the realization of the Presence of God here and now, within you, in the life you are living.

The experiences you have had in these communions from the beginning have built up in you a resistance to evil, unconscious to yourselves, but there is a tendency to be satisfied with the feeling of the quality of the inspiration given you in these lovely freedoms. Be not satisfied; hold it, make the resolution to act upon the wisdom that has been vouchsafed you through these answers to your needs, and act accordingly. And the act is forever one and the same thing – stay your mind in Light. Hold, one-pointed to the actual idea of God Himself here, now. Hold your gains, hold your spiritual self together, bring all that you know to this one point, and then “the wonders will appear”.

How much it takes to remember your Redeemer who liveth in you! But do you not see that we choose either terror or faith, inertia or action, darkness or light with every thought? Your thought is your armor. This is the magic, this is the splendor, this is the resurrection, this is the mystery of life.

Keep touching Reality with the heart; hold your peace!

... When we consider the manifold weaknesses of the strongest devotions in time of prayer, it is a sad consideration. I throw myself down in my chamber, and I call in and invite God and His angels thither, and when they are there, I neglect God and His angels for the noise of a fly, for the rattling of a coach, for the whining of a door; I talk on... knees bowed down as though I prayed to God; and if God and His angels should ask me, when I thought of God last in that prayer, I cannot tell.

Careless Devotions, John Donne, 1573-1631

Letter 36

You speak of the discouragement of delay. Let me reply to this in a roundabout way. Someone has said that nature teaches us everything once; it is indeed a great and ever-present analogy for us to watch and profit from constantly. How often have I told you of the importance of healing away old habits, appetites that are both physical and intellectual! It becomes a dull story and strikes the ear with no response like many urgent warnings. But elimination is necessary to life, just as food is; it is our hungers that have to be transmuted that our spiritual body may live. Long ago it was thought that pain and self-inflicted misery were the way to teach the material spirit of the body a necessary discipline; men seemed to forget that Jesus taught that the body was the temple of the Holy Ghost. We are still taught by pain, though not deliberately self-taught. But the master who overcame all things taught that by the lifting up of the Spirit the body was also resurrected; and the discipline of awareness of the Spirit will transmute material desire, intellectual excesses and emotional storms as heated water turns into steam. Chaotic force can be changed to noble uses. Tormenting desire can be turned into creative power of the mind; resentment dissolved and re-formed to understanding. Receive light like a tree. Accept the ever-present beauty that pours out from within, the indwelling Christ.

Yes, this invisible God seems very far away and impractical in times of dullness and waiting; hard to reach and deeply hidden in the center of your being. You try to find Him but your outer you is so critical and suspicious, so exacting, that it is difficult for Him to manifest in the company of such thoughts. Your success will come in laying aside the critical spirit, in releasing yourself from the sense of outer pressure, in letting go completely all negations that block the Giver of joy and peace, and surrendering to a feeling of fulfillment. Let your light shine! Be strong in thought, and that thought locked in immortality is the principle that is deathless – the love of God.

Listen to God in silence when we have spoken to Him, for he speaks in His turn during prayer.

John Peter de Caussade, d. 1751

Letter 37

At this time when the tragedy of the world presses hard, remember that the power of God is upon you. Let it use you – *let it*; do not strive. And let this awareness of the Presence of God be like a flame to you, lighting you, warning you, cheering you this day, and all days. It can be for you a Pentecost, for you shall speak with new tongues. Open wide and let the power of the Spirit flow through you like rivers of living water, sweeping out all pettiness, all fears, all doubts of self. When you do this, you have risen, and the new self has been released from the things of the old, the things you have feared and fought against. Through such daily dying, you pass beyond the reach of morbid thoughts and entanglements of nagging fears, and each day you can begin as if it were the morning of your life. Become timeless and never bind yourself with age, for the mind as well as the Spirit can be kept young, childlike and free. Faith, weak as it may be, can roll away the stone from your door. Rejoice in the new day and go forth with lifted faces and an inner awareness that will shine out from you; an invisible light perhaps, for only those who can see will see it through their own vision.

God wants only one thing in the whole world, the thing which it needs: ... that thing is to find the innermost part of the noble spirit of man clean and ready for Him to accomplish the divine purpose therein. He has all power in heaven and earth, but the power to do His work in man against man's will, He has not got.

John Tauler, 1304-1361

Letter 38

One of you said, "I become strangely hard, like ice; if I could only be thawed!" I cannot thaw you but perhaps I can help. You are going through stages of growth, of thought, of blossoming. This is real life, and real life is in the schoolroom through which we all have to pass. Just remember what we repeat so often, touch the Spirit, the warm fire within you, be happy with it, and you will "thaw". Keep on opening, receiving, listening and obeying, and use the inner power and wisdom for every humble thing you do. The problems of daily life make people ice-bound so they need thawing; the newspapers, angers, cold self-righteous furies, terrors – all these are the dangerous elements of human existence, and they do things to your consciousness to harden you, to dismay and disappoint you and take away your hope while you live in the dreariness of a man-made world. You will thaw at the eternal touch, and your world will not be man-made, but the world of immortality, now.

Some of you say, how can we do this with our beloveds in the terror of war? Believe me, you cannot do this without your beloveds being blessed by it. One soldier wrote recently, "When I need some strength of mind, some peace, some love, I've only to look close by – within – and there it is! ... Keep me in your heart as a source, too, of help, for there isn't any blood or thunder possible that can destroy a man's soul when he has received power from God from within himself." This comes warm and living from deep experience and loneliness, when he had found the enlightenment he needed to tell him what to do. He asked, and received. Is it necessary for you to be brought face to face with such savagery before you can turn in panic to your only hope of peace and strength?

The purpose of these communions is to try and make you see that it is of vital importance for you to reach up and touch this quiet, still, clean, holy, omniscient place of eternal peace all the time. This is living beside the still waters, here are the green pastures. Abide in the living word and you will yourself to be sustained, comforted and given joy, and so you will help them through their ordeal. There is no time nor space in this realm where you are aware of the Holy Spirit.

We know the Spirit by its victorious tone.

Emerson's Journal

Letter 39

The outer you, in its foolishness and rebellion and suffering, bends to the arrows that fly, to the perils and the dangers. But when it surrenders to the inner you whose instinct is for divine reality, you are instantly released from the law of sin and death. Therefore, when you have to meet the challenge of the world, come – humble, sore bewildered – and lay thyself aside, this outer self of instant fears, sadness and temptation, and step into thy inner self who welcomes you and leads you to the high altar where all things are renewed, transcended. Here you are released. Have no fear; it is a sacrament indeed.

You have undertaken the great adventure of becoming holy children, sons of God, and you have to go through a sort of untangling to reach this place of communion and awareness. Be assured that your sole duty is to go within and dissolve by releasing the outer entanglements, to surrender appetites and forebodings. As I have to remind you again, the question of appetites is different for each one, both physical and mental; nor must there be resentment and the old sense of duty in the surrender; it is rather permitting a joyful conviction to grow that there is something infinitely more satisfying. Of course there will be conflicts! Who is not familiar with the reasonable – oh very reasonable! – arguments that come rushing to justify the very human desires of mind and body? They must be met with as much gentleness toward yourself as you would meet them when trying to help another, otherwise your instant rebellion will obstruct and delay you. But in the true spirit of surrender, the giving up of everything that has become a burden is little effort, and the reward is instant; all things in this state work for thy good. And not the old idea of good which was a scourge; but the “goodness which is a rapture”.

Let thy troubled hearts be at peace in this serene and healing place, for here the Lord Christ will refresh you; here he will lift the heavy burden from your minds and in thy hearts he will breathe renewed joy and quietude. Have faith in practice.

... It is not that we do not see the faults, the weaknesses and stupidities; but we waste no time with them, for that is all carnal, heavy and human. It is what the outer people are struggling with. We know these things in you, but you are becoming cleansed and purified through these communions; it is the inner you that – being sought – grows in strength to you, and it releases you from the meaningless and savage experiences of the race. “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” Forgive, give over, release. There is great freedom when this is understood.

In spite of the teaching of Jesus we have been taught to hate evil, but that only justifies the more our complete satisfaction in criticism. In such emotional criticism of our friends and enemies we appear better people to ourselves. It is not the way. It is not our business, and instead of freedom, we bind the consequences of poisonous hates and resentments to ourselves. We can turn from abstract evil without harm and with a sense of human righteousness. But

the human does not hate evil disincarnate; he hates it in a person. Then we ask, "How can I love my enemies?" It would be plain hypocrisy to say we can, or must, do this in the ordinary sense of the word. But the true meaning will appear to you when we say that the outer you cannot love the outer you of another who lives and has his being in the ancient darkness of the race. Instead, come within, and while abiding in the conscious oneness with your inner Self, see and bless with understanding the inner you of that enemy whose outer you is struggling in the dark jungles of his journey, and by thus releasing him, forgiving him, giving him over, you help him on his way. This is loving your enemy; this is the brotherhood of man. And there is no sentimentality about it; for only by abiding in the indwelling Spirit can you have the so-called human wisdom as well as the divine wisdom to deal with him according to his needs as well as your own. You may have to put him in prison, but watch thy heart in the matter, for out of it are the issues of life! In times of fierce antagonism, realize that the enemy is angry thought; fill yourself, without thought of any person, with a sense of infinite love and eternal peace, for thus are all negative things confounded, and a table will be set before thee in the presence of thine enemies.

Give freely to thy Spirit and judge not; be longsuffering and patient, for when you are kind with the kindness of the Spirit to those who are unregenerate, the act frees your own unregeneracy as well. Blessed is he that sees and understands and forgives. Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven the trespasses, the darkneses, the things negative which terrify. They are forgotten in this high clear stillness. Love conquereth all things.

Q. During these intervals given to interior silence, what does our soul do?

A. It ceases discourse and reflections by a free act which suspends them... it rests in attentive silence, rather like one who believing himself on the point of hearing music makes himself alert and attentive to what he wishes to hear.

John Peter de Caussade d. 1751

Letter 40

How irksome is obedience! The outer you is the spoiled child; it is greedy for new sensation; it runs to bright ribbons or gay music down the street. But no small child grows to man's estate without suffering. It is disciplined by the antagonisms aroused; discipline and obedience are both a mystery, and no one arrives at the holy place undisciplined and disobedient. Obedience is irksome for the wild colt and the stubborn ass; why is it necessary? Because the still, eternal law is in divine order. The ignorant and undisciplined and the disobedient perish, for it taketh a thousand to make one. The law is impersonal, inevitable; those who obey and cast aside their rebellious passions are given freedom, protection and joy.

Let us look at man. Every step from childhood, has he not been disciplined? What for? To meet a standard. What is a standard? An ideal goal, an ideal man. The race instinctively knows the inner you – what else is good citizenship, good sportsmanship? What are “men of honor”, “men of good breeding” but those who have been trained to a point where instinctively the inner you stepped to the fore and took charge. What stood up at Agincourt, Crecy? No spoiled, undisciplined men, but men who from childhood were taught obedience.

You speak frequently in common talk of the man you trust in a crisis. What do you trust? That something deeper than he will rise up and take charge. The unseen inner you will always obey.

Now let us ponder. Are you going to be a lazy undisciplined slave to the weaknesses of your outer you? Are you going to let the sleep of forgetfulness steal over your mentality and blunt your keen awareness? Are you going to seek after soft escapes where there is no real rest nor safety nor contentment? Ponder on these things that I speak of in gentle companionship, for a hint is as good as hours of words. There is no finer reward than that which comes from loving obedience! This is what brings rest, security, abundance and love. Here you reach a place out of chaos. Here all things fall into their allotted places, divinely measured.

Now perhaps, we can reach an understanding, and more will dawn on you by degrees, as you must admit it has in the past. The hint is this; certain it is that he, who, undisciplined, charges life with bit in teeth will meet violence. Violence attracts violence, but so do extremes like weakness, inertia, unawareness and ignorance. The ignorant man often wonders why violence surrounds him, but every soul upon this planet is disciplined. Only those who gladly run out to meet it are divinely protected, for they reach a place of safety. It is true that many spiritual people have within them certain unrealized weaknesses; that is why they often suffer and say, “I have not been bad, I have done worthy things – why – why – why?” This is only a hint, for the whole truth cannot yet be understood; but as you open yourselves to a divine guidance, your outward self will invite the inward one, in which there is no ignorance, to walk in companionship, and will

accept the discipline needful with a high heart, for the knowledge vouchsafed will be that then the discipline is light, soon over – over instantly when realized.

Now do not expect hard discipline – rather be there first (in the secret place) in obedience and you will be spared a lifetime. I say to you that when you are obedient, you help all those in prison by your freedom, for you are free in your obedience to the divine law, to its will.

I know this is puzzling, but it should enlarge your Spirit with heavenly joy. For when you have found it in perception, when you have realized it as you will here in this life, you will free the imprisoned, lift the darkened into light so they will not have to go through violence; you will open the eyes of the blind that they may at last be free to see themselves, and you will unstop the ears of the deaf who cannot hear the divine whisper. You will see great wonders come to pass, and although the reason behind it all may confound you now, march gaily on up the road, obedient with every breath.

I charge you to release yourselves from the last stain of materialism, for then only are you protected; I charge you to be forgiving and patient with all persons, whether they be stupid, melancholy or evil, and to keep your faces always uplifted to the highest intent, for this, above all, releases your life from all violence; I charge you to live in faith, for this will give you a splendor, a light which will be manifest to all the bewildered, the lonely, the harassed – a beacon in the storm. Stand to your full stature, for I bear witness that eternal love can be reached.

When “obedience” is spoken, you know what that means; no one can translate it for you. It means seeing how often during your day you can remember Him in whose Presence you stand, for by calling Him to mind, you glorify each moment.

His giving is my taking.

Meister Eckhart, 1260-1327

Letter 41

There will be a time, as with Christian, when you will come to a gate and your heaviest burden will fall away; it will fall when the realization of the spiritual and unseen life is the only reality. In times of stress, that is difficult, and that is why these communions are good. In the beginning, you came to them through suffering; now you come for refreshment and joy, because through them you find you are strengthened. There is nothing to fear if you stay within in quietness, and if your thought is not allowed to slump into the slough of despond. The human story, the alarms, the heavyweightedness is understood. You have your measurement, each one of you. You are protected by your own thoughts, because your intent is for perfection, your intent is for grace.

Now follow me; step into this garden surrounded by cloistered arches. Sit here awhile. Lay aside the heavy garment of the world, of darkness and foreboding. Put on this shining raiment. Do not look back or look ahead! Do not cling. Walk here in this quiet place, in the flowered stillness; come here to this fountain and drink of these waters; they wash your Spirit clear. Here is where you ask that you may receive.

... I know what it is to make mental pictures and bury oneself in a mire of one's own making, to be so cowardly one is sickened by a thought of spiritual help. I know what it is not to find my way, how pride and fear and all the negatives lie heavy on the chest and tire to the bone, how the outer you in a material world sweats apace in the heat of the struggle and snatches at quick opportunities to solve his problem. It is always the same struggle. I know how regrets and shames come in the night to shame again. But do not hang back with your mistakes; it but gives them power. Release in thy heart all things but joy and gladness, simple beauty and pity and understanding and forgiveness. That is being vitally and spiritually active; that is freedom. In your everyday life, you cannot yet hold this quality of Spirit all the time; you go up and you go down, but each time you go higher. Have no fear; step in here and put on your invisible cloak, and nothing can reach you from without. You can only reach God in this holy stillness, in calmness. What is a week, a month, in this august destiny! Play the part nobly; refuse frantic littleness. Stand at thy full stature and deny everything that is not of God. Make manifest in your material life the inward surety that is being breathed into you, and you, in turn, breathe it into your outward existence.

Come unto Me, all ye that are heavy laden. Trust not the eye nor the ear nor the tongue, for I am closer than hands or feet. Deep in the invisible center... here I am. Trust in Me, thy Father; My life I give unto thee. I will lift the weariness from thy heart, despair from thy mind and give thee peace.

Go forth renewed, refreshed, reborn... in confidence.

*Dost thou love picking meat? Or wouldst thou see
A man i' the clouds and hear him speak to thee?*

John Bunyan, 1628-1688

Letter 42

We talk of faith like a grain of mustard seed, faith that will move a mountain. Why, if you were a poor mongrel, a mangy cringing pariah, one touch of this strong antiseptic faith would heal you instantly, would steady your heartbeat and thrill you with an ancient courage. Do away with mongrel thought! I have seen the little made great, the weak made giants and the fools made wise by this divine elixir.

The men of science tell us that if you lift your hand you move the planets – ever so little, but a little. Remember the invisible between you everywhere in the realm of the mind. We are all held together, so if you go down, you drag others down with you; you either glorify the invisible world about you or darken it. No wonder many are helped almost instantly when they come into crystal purity! Hold and keep the invisible substance pure. Don't you know how, when some startling thing happens, some virulent personality rises out of the depths into your life, you feel it? Help to cleanse him by an act of faith; turn loose the fountains and cleanse the air in your outer circle; keep it clear and unsullied. In this atmosphere are you alive, deathless; this is your home. Start your day here; bathe in it; drink deep. Everyone who comes, whether it be a child or a dog, multitudes or a single unhappy soul, people in darkness and despair, you can help to heal. Such is your task – to make the unseen a reality.

Go forth, then, in the Invisible, and by holding and bending every thought and desire to this purpose, yea though you walk through the valley of shadow, you will be comforted. Open wide and let it pour out, strong, vibrant, still; it is stronger than human life for it is Life, spiritual, eternal, everlastingly renewing. Go therefore into your little world in your humble outer you, go forth – giants! “My peace I give unto you”; it is so real. This largesse is the love you can give your neighbor.

Letter 43

We have watched you on your way; we have seen the crossroads that tempt you down and away from the straight path ahead. We have seen you stop, puzzled, but you have listened and heard the warning. At last you have come to a place on your journey where your burden is growing lighter, where you can live miraculously, live in freedom, live without fear. Shake yourselves clear of old habits and travel light, as you have been told. Every moment is a challenge to an act of faith, but you have a joy in the companionship of the saints. One more hint – watch your tongue; do not speak from without; make the habit of speaking from within. Then you are safe.

Hold thyself to Thyself and live in splendor; question nothing; be strong and remember, you do not walk alone. Frightening thoughts will tempt you down the wrong road, but blow your silver bugle and the walls will fall down before you; let nothing keep you against the wailing wall where they still weep. No – say, “I do not understand what I see humanly, but I know my kingdom is within”, and accept gaily. By accepting, I mean go out into a dull world, into the shallowness of human life, and see immortality and the grandeur of the human heart. The very people you criticize can betray you by acts of heroism. You touch it wherever you go in your seeing of it. I know all the wrong-headedness and stupidities latent in the human overcoat, the temptations and subtleties that lie in its fold, but the true, revealing, piercing spiritual gleam will free you from the bondage of your own critical spirit.

Nothing is asked of you but the highest you can reach. Therefore go forth; all the goodness, all the loveliness, all things hoped for are thine if you let nothing bind you. This is the resurrection and the freedom. Go forth on thy way, no one before thee but the Lord Jesus.

... You are not altogether aware of the spiritual strength that you have won. We want to realize it, to concentrate it as through a burning glass on any problem you may have. Read over these things and *make them manifest*. Because of a childish unbelief, you do not act upon what you have heard, what you have learned.

Suppose you compare your mind to a cloud; within this cloud is the divine spark – but your awareness of this inward light is intermittent. You can glow with such a fiery faith your cloud will be a blinding light. Since you have found this contact, do what you have been told – bring a fiery enthusiasm and listen to the words roused within. The outer you meets a suggestion of despair – let Him shine on it, burn it out! Do not meet it with a soft, wishful prayer, but with a stalwart enthusiasm. The promptings within will voice all your answers to your temptations. Look at lack – fill it. Look at want – supply it. This is not time for spiritual laggards. Remember, I am speaking of your inner kingdom, “my words are spirit”.

More often than not your mind is filled with unrelated, unfruitful thoughts. It is good practice whether walking or riding or waiting to use those moments to be in touch with your divine fire; to get into action-thought. Use your imagination to see it as a great dynamo. Your fires must not burn low, and in doing this it is as if you put on fuel. Shake yourselves, laugh and play, and your thoughts will be charged with flame and power, and you will burn up obstructions, these quaking fears. It may be difficult to believe this while your problem looms, but we can assure you that it is the glorious way, for the tiniest efforts bring results. As evil men are alert, active and sometimes inspired, we tell you also to keep alert, sing your high note and stop the daydreaming which leads you into the dark valleys.

What is being given you is prevision; here at this place in high hope, in scorn of defeat, you are being challenged. Accept the challenge gladly, for in the accepting lies success; in this is victory won. Rest on the idea of victory – always!

Visible deeds do not increase the goodness of the inner life, whatever their number or dimension; they can never be worth much if the inward process is small or nonexistent, and they can never be of little worth if the inner process exists and is great.

Meister Eckhart, 1260-1327

Letter 44

Let me try to explain a little what is going on. We, because of your desire, have made the effort to teach you not dogmatically, but through suggestions, feelings, love. We try to inspire you by delicate hints to realize your own power. Of course, it is difficult, but every time you come to a realization, it is a step toward victory. Don't be discouraged by the delays and seeming difficulties and the curious states your human mechanism seems to bring forth in you. You cannot push yourself too fast; be happy, be gay, for it makes it so much easier not be solemn.

Do not expect to hold great revelations all the time; and one thing beware of – do not drive and scold yourself if you cannot keep your outer you where you want it. This is but a hint to you to take your adventure with an easy confidence rather than a straining eagerness. You have high spiritual moments where the skies have cleared for you; don't be dismayed if you can't keep them clear by your will. There is a rhythm. Remember, as I have told you before, the outer you and the inner you are not separated; the divine you is in you from the beginning. Many men have lived through a life and not known it, because the art of turning the eye inward does not come to all. Neither does education come to all, but those who have it often inspire others in their search for knowledge. The child does not know that he has within himself the potentiality of an educated man; he

may go through life and never know it. In the same way, you have within you a spiritual giant, undreamed of by your present consciousness. Through your desire, you have started your journey inward, and according to your desire, this spiritual consciousness will more and more reveal itself to you, teach you, inspire you, take charge of you, so that your outer you is absorbed the way the child, ignorant and fearful, is absorbed by the educated man. It is as if you made room for light; it is as if the amateur became an artist in touch with the indefinable majesty of his art.

You have accused me of saying at times, this is “life and death important”, and that I have contradicted myself by telling you to restrain too much eagerness.

It is difficult not to sound contradictory in a matter so delicate, so subtle. Suppose we go back to the artist idea; it is a “life and death matter” for the artist to work at five-finger exercises, but he never becomes an artist if he strains. I am trying to tell you – and telling you very badly – that a loving enthusiasm which forgives clumsiness and awkwardness but keeps happily on is what is required.

It is true I tell you to be eager – not to be eager; to search with all your heart – and not to make an effort. Here is the answer – you make an effort not to make an effort, which is what all great artists do. It is another way of saying, in great action is great peace; and what is most beautiful is that when you find the great stillness, you are in the place where you are answered.

What is meant is that when you go out into the startle of daily life – hold the hand of thy Lord. Hold His hand as you were told. He can be so quickly, delicately pushed aside. It is indeed a question of “life and death”. Hold Him close; no one can go into the arena for you; you go alone with Him.

Practice not being startled, scattered by the daily assaults, bored into daydreaming by long hours of indecision and dullness. Be confident, be radiant, be aware that you do not walk alone.

The present hour is the descending God, and all things obey; all the past exists to it as subordinate; all the future is contained in it... By lowly listening, omniscience is for me. By faithfully receiving, omnipotence is for me.

Emerson's Journal

Letter 45

In the beginning we reminded you that the way was marked by realizations, that you were to resolve everything to thought and your thought would be manifest, and now, when we look back, we find that you have been brought step by step to heights of realization; many so subtle, so faint that at the time your awareness was faint – immature. The whole business of spiritual growth is a development of your conscious realization that thought is the beginning and end of your life, whether it be spiritual or material. In the negative experience where man has refused to look deeper than his five senses and has indulged his appetites, he is bound to meet the full realization of his failures, whether it be in defeat or violence, sickness or despair. And you who have endeavored to seek your life within, will find that your realization cometh in the awakening to the beautiful and freeing knowledge that the thought of your inward selection, that is, what you choose to entertain, will be “made flesh”. As I said before, think your way out. Believe this; choose your thoughts with wisdom and make your own declaration for this a high form of that misunderstood word, prayer. Prayer has always been a cup held up to be filled.

Now the purport of this wisdom is to reveal your character to you and in the very depths of the wisdom that will come to you, if you will listen, is contained the truth for your particular problem. Through the eyes of wisdom, you will see your particular direction; how and where to use your gifts, how to collect them into your personal galaxy. For example, you will see (when you grow still enough, delicate and sensitive enough in holiness) where you are resentful, where you are forgetful, selfish, wasteful, and where you are weak. Instead of sitting in dismay before the array of your lacks of character, receive the divine healing Spirit from within and let the fountain of reassuring goodness play in the dry places that are athirst. In this way, selflessness, love and consideration come with enlightenment and are constantly renewed, until they come involuntarily to stay and become a part of you. Or, and it is nearer the truth, the inner you is called out into your life, and you begin to understand a little what your Christhood means. You begin to realize a little how you are in truth and practice a son of God. This is prayer, for prayer is actually the filling of the want, the lack, the emptiness. It is an action to take in quietness by yourself. As it has been said many times before, you teach your outer you by staying within.

Sometimes when you repeat the great familiar words, they will sound stale and uninspired, but they will take on new meaning, and in the quiet they will be redeemed for you. Your part is in obeying the words that are full of power, words that you seek and love; it is not enough that “Love your neighbor as yourself” is a releasing and beautiful concept – you must say to your outer you, “Do not flame, do not burn with angry fire, do not try to justify yourself with ‘righteous indignation’. Be still, impersonal, silent.” Receive this eternal love and let it pass through you to the outermost limits of your world. Peace beyond understanding is not a pleasant hope nor revery; it must be told this tumultuous outer self. Stand behind and calm his excited or morose personality. It is not

enough to perceive a faith that can make whole; you must give it to this frightened child, reassuring and filling with confidence his quailing heart.

Therefore, teach thyself; be thine own master; be thine own physician; find thine own Christ!

And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

Isaiah 30:21

The way of the mystic is not a drifting in quietness nor a pleasant emotional release. It is the way of firm self-discipline, of constant vigilance. It is the way of the soldier, who needs the full armour of God – “the sword of the spirit and the spurs of resolution and action”. Or as one has said, “This is no voyage for a little barque, this which my venturesome prow goes cleaving, nor for a pilot who would spare himself”.

Anonymous

Letter 46

As often as we speak with you through these letters, you will find there is much repetition; there is bound to be, for whatever we tell you has its origin in the first word, the first instruction, the first principle – “Seek ye first the kingdom”. We tell it to you in many ways, and yet it all resolves down to the one eternal truth or principle. In words one attempts to bring the remembrance of awareness of the divine spark within each individual, and by stimulating the imagination and reason reveal the truth of the indwelling Spirit. Each one of us makes his own choice; it is either the way of negation, a materialistic philosophy, or the way of the creative Spirit, the Way of Life. “But one thing is needful”, he said, and “*now* is the appointed time”. One has said that “two of the greatest words in our language are *now* and *within*.”

From the first moment of our enlightenment we are given complete freedom, but one of the hardest things for us to learn is the eternal vigilance that is necessary to preserve it. He who would “bring into captivity every thought” to the obedience of the Christ within has set himself the first task, the first self-discipline. Who does not know the temptation of yielding to an emotional upsurging that hardens first into destructive thought and is so swiftly followed by the spoken word! On the very edge of such a moment of violence, there is only one thing to be done; turn instantly about, run within to your high tower and

give that dark cloud of boiling emotions (so reasonably justified) to the Almighty within, and while you wait in quietness, you will be gradually aware of the transmutation of this human steam into spiritual wisdom and understanding. This is not repression; this is release; this is turning destructive power to creative use; this is true freedom.

Stand in the inner light and let all the old garments fall away from you; then you shall walk through the fiery furnace unscathed; harbor no thought that will burn. That is your sacrifice to your day, to your time; that is laying down your life. Lay down the vain imaginings, that waste and destroy; lay down appetites, those of thought as well as those of the body, and stand clothed in pure Spirit, released from the human turmoil, and you will be uplifted high over panics, hatreds, ignorances and alarms. These are the acts of faith, and your faith will make you free.

Yes, walk in the garments of immortality now. Do not take on too much the suffering of the world, for the concept is not only too large to understand but is now beyond us. Trusting is part of your role, trusting in high hope, in peace and confidence. Wear those garments of joy without fearful anticipations; look upon the quiet of the hills, of a candle untroubled by the wind; be very, very simple, very uncomplex, very natural in the eternal sense. Keep in the storm center, safe, a power for victory, healing and peace. Be aware of eternal values as against material values, be spiritually intelligent, keep the “naked intent” and never forget your direction!

All things in nature are equally incredible.

Alfred Lord Whitehead, 1861-1947

Letter 47

Yes, there seems to be a heavy dismaying delay in the outer world, as if the waters of material life were in heavy tide and the times were frozen. And yet you, as children of the Way, have been secretly freed from fear as you have advanced in your invisible selves. The paradox is puzzling to many who journey upon this road, that great revelation and joy often cometh in times of seeming darkness, obstruction and difficulty. In periods of confusion, those who live in the invisible while in the visible world can be as yeast, the ferment, the center of the light which is illuminating the dark places, because they remain in peace and are quietly and gently instructed. And by instruction, I mean the only form it could take, that of feeling the actual Presence, the reality of the helping guiding Spirit.

As you well know, when novices attempt to push forward through their own effort and fresh enthusiasm, the world of reality opposes. This is true in art and all human endeavor – that when a positive move is made, an obstruction is met. The question then is, Will the challenge dismay and discourage? In the material world, the successful ones are not dismayed but gather more strength, win more victories. But the young soul with its new perceptions half revealed, a little overconfident because he is not on guard against the outer you, goes down in a cloud of chilling doubt, for the world is grim indeed to those sensitive souls just awakening. When you go beyond the point of perception, the burden is lifted for the first time. Remain steadfast! Return to childlike simplicity and doubt not. Are you not aware that there is a no-man's-land between your periods of invisible at-one-ment, your holy communion, your sense of reliance in these heavenly moments, and the contact with the impinging material world with its laws of time and place, events and confusions? It is indeed hard to remain there and remember across the no-man's-land to this place of creative power and serenity. What has happened, and why you have felt the protection of peace, is that the no-man's-land is narrowing; you remain closer to your place of safety and you are able to bring beams of light to your material world.

You have asked to be spiritual beings; do you know what spirituality is? It is a loftiness, sustaining, august, fiery, yet still presence. Can you carry this feeling across no-man's-land and hold it in your spiritually-evaporating outside life? Whatever happens, stand in thy full spiritual stature and deny everything that is not of God; nothing will then have power over you except your highest conception.

By attaining the height of meditation we gain fulness of rest. Returning to the root means rest... and the return according to destiny means the eternal; knowing the eternal means enlightenment. The holy man attends to the inner, not the outer. All things spring up without a word spoken.

Who by unending discipline of the senses embraces unity cannot perish. By controlling the vitality and enducing tenderness, he can become as a little child. There is a Being wondrous and complete; before heaven and earth it was. Therefore the holy man sits with a liberated mind.

Selections from Lao-tze, 604 B.C.

Letter 48

Your world is invisible, the world of your spiritual life within; but invisible also is the world of rumor, racial fears, ignorances, the greed of multitudes, public opinion and human passions. All these are invisible. So are creative inspiration, honest endeavor and integrity. Invisible also is the intent which makes the true servant of medicine that which is behind the long hours and personal sacrifice; all this is faith invisible. Many who see a sword see but a blade of sharpened steel; but it is a symbol of anger, pain, annihilation and woe. Those who look and are held captive out there by what they see are amazed and bewildered when invisible forces suddenly focus into an event. They are startled and disturbed when the hidden forces the mind has qualified are manifested in action.

You, who from desire for truth and eternal beauty have stepped out upon the great adventure, are coming out of that strange captivity, the prison of ignorance, and when you realize the invisible while in the visible, the incarnate in the carnate, the Holy Ghost in flesh and blood, Spirit in matter, thought back of the material world, you have learned your first lesson. Have pity upon the tortured soul who has been deformed by that which is silent within him. Because of the invisible world of mind and thought, we can reach one another; and because of the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit, we can make gifts of healing and peace, without a word. In this way, we obey the second commandment of Christ.

The invisible is the only reality; honor is invisible, so is love; yet they last and all else crumbles and changes. Go forth, then, beloved invisible ones, knowing that you have touched the only reality. The place where you now stand you have reached through listening, following an invisible desire, a vision which pierced the dark. There is great tenderness for you when your feet are weary and your shoulders are tired of the burden and your emotions smother you with fear. Ill-smelling winds blow upon you from those places where liberty has been imprisoned, honor defiled and greed unmasked; you hear it in voices, it sweeps

across the daily news, and meets you at every turning. You are in a sea of invisible negatives if you look down; all ancient, all insistent. They challenged me and my father and my father's father, and they challenged you. Face them! For all these things are met at some time. Face them and then look up and see them no longer. He that dwelleth within is the light of the world and can shine through your every act if you will but obey, live in His presence and keep illumined in His light.

Therefore shine and take great heart whether there are wars or rumors of wars, alarms and confusion and all the high cry of chaos, for through Him abiding in you, you can fulfill your privilege of life and bring light into darkness.

Keep your mind a lighted lamp.

When men doubt it is often because they are troubled by density, what is firm to touch or appears hard to the eye. The infinities of the smallness they know nothing about, such as the solidity of gases or the vast spaces between the universes which make a lump of sugar. They trust their limited perceptions of the world about them and are entirely ignorant of the rapidly changing conceptions of matter. Men need to loom more, not less, to science and such men as Eddington and Jeans who are not confounded by the visible universe.

Anonymous

Letter 49

Sometimes in moments of temptation when one is enveloped in the fog of doubt and disbelief, there is a lowering of the bars which guard you from fear so that meditation is difficult. That is understood. It is as if a noisy crowd had entered the room and your spirit of communion had been pushed to the uttermost edge and then lost. But these things happen during the pilgrimage and your safety is in knowing that underneath all temporary confusion lies your intent. Even if you sit with mind racing and you scold yourselves for being ensnared by nonessentials, let me assure you that by sitting obediently, even though your mind is concerned with trifles, the act is a prayer in itself and you are given the privilege of holding to your direction until you come through the fears or perplexities. In this way, you go on your everlasting journey in eternal life and glory immortal. Be more aware of the transcendental loveliness in simple acts; here you are, two of three people sitting together in quiet with a desire to place themselves in the way of learning – to be at one with immortality, but I tell you that though your minds wander and at times the experience seems meaningless, you have lifted barriers against the power of darkness. This is turning toward the Light of the world.

Let us speak for a moment about discipline, but discipline as a beneficent force, which is ultimately revealed as involuntary strength in time of need. You have been told many things to which you have responded with loyal belief, but you have not acted upon them with all your might and main. The endeavor to apply these promises to your insistent daily lives has been spasmodic. But surely you have seen already that the good to be received or extracted from this adventure is obedience to the law. You have seen the power and the force created by the power of the sword; there is a certain perfection, however misguided, in the application of the laws of Caesar in the body politic. Let us examine the antithesis of that law; first, deep centralization and individual responsibility to the inner voice. You know the results of unorganized living. You know, too, that the organized disciplined forces of Caesar are gained through self-sacrifice and discipline, ruthless though they may be. To overcome the world (the power of Caesar), one must organize and discipline oneself, but where he has seeds of defeat sown in healthy ground, you have victory inherent in your enterprise. Your work is to be strong and clean enough within through self-discipline to bring to completion the work that has been given to you.

You ask how? Again we tell you, control appetites; appetites that rise from personal desires that are unworthy of the Spirit, as well as the appetites of the body. A problem presents itself; nothing is trifling, therefore bring the serene clarity of intelligence, that high spiritual intelligence, to bear on it. Shall I do this or that? and you will be told the way to face because your intent is to obey righteousness rather than to drift in the lassitude of unrealized potentialities. The time has come to break into light, and to keep this light illumined calls for self-restraint, sacrifice and self-examination.

This country is today paying a dreadful penalty for the neglect of youth by parents and teachers who do not believe in discipline. This disservice cannot be overestimated, for the timeless truth is that this planet is a schoolroom for discipline, and the beginning of that knowledge should come when a child is hardly aware of cause and effect, of the waiting consequence. The results of mistakes, poor judgment and youthful enthusiasm can be taught with wise, firm gentleness and even a sense of humor, but His law must be taught in order to prevent the unhappy bewilderment and suffering with which youth will meet frustration and injustice when he crosses the first threshold into his world. Self-discipline is the armor of God and can be taught as easily as the discipline on the athletic field. If it is not, then when he leaves the license of home and school he has to face the pain and misery of the law of trial and error, whether swift or slow in coming. Strong, self-controlled, gay, vital; not self-indulged, destructive, satiated and unhealthy minded, ignorant of the "laws of sin and death".

I speak of youth, but as these truths are ageless so are you, they belong to you as to the very young, you are still very young in this adventure. Be vigilant, keep eternally alert, keep in the quiet estate and be always aware that you walk with God.

O Thou, who by Mind everlasting rulest the world, Maker of land and sky, who orderest Time to flow from the beginning, and Thyself at rest, makest all things move; whom no external causes urged to fashion the work of fluctuating matter, but the innate Form of the Highest Good, beyond all rivalry. Thou deduces all from a heavenly pattern. Thyself most beautiful, guiding a beautiful universe of Mind, moulding it to that Image, and commanding its perfect parts to combine for the perfection of the whole. Thou blindest the elements by numbers, that cold should match with heat, and dry with moist, lest the pure flame should fly off, or the heavy things overlay all lands.

In like manner, Thou bringeth into being Souls, and the lesser lives, yoking sublime to frail vehicles, which by a kindly law Thou makest to return to Thyself by virtue of their native fire.

Grant, O Father, to our minds, to climb to that august abode, grant us to visit the Fountain of the Good, grant that, finding the Light, we may open wide and fix on Thee the eyes of your souls. Scatter the mists and the heaviness of the earthly mass, and shine out with Thine own splendour; for Thou art the Serene. Thou art the tranquil resting place of the steadfast; to behold Thee is the aim. Thou art at once the beginning, the carrier, the guide, the pathway and the end.

Boethius, A.D. 475

Letter 50

This is a time for rededication; it is a time to live at your spiritual height. Do all you can to keep free from negative excitements; rather be open to quiet, powerful faith. Indeed, it is through your silences that the flaming powers press. It is difficult with our limitations and the human scale to comprehend the majesty of the spiritual power within; it is a faculty to make the instant flaming, and these holy, immeasurable powers are only trusted to you when you are universal, selfless. Lay down anxiety, lay down impatience, lay down frustration; clear the heart and seek ye first the kingdom. I cannot tell you how to make yourselves in hand, for that mental and spiritual discipline is the part a man must play himself in seeking the kingdom, as I said before; but you can keep a retreat like a pool in the rapids; or to make a better image, be like the iceberg which is seven-tenths under water. When you learn that seven-tenths of you must be still and calm and in control, while three-tenths is in active life you will have some conceptions of the grandeur of the attempt you are making. In the old way three-tenths was with the source of inspiration of your life and the seven-tenths was with – well, shall I say it!

This is only friendly talking, trying to bring to your remembrance what is yours. May I say here that the mind cannot remember easily when it is full of criticism; you cannot afford to take umbrage, to have prejudices, nor hold to yourself these violent human emotions which flare up in human contacts. Let them go and dwell in the source of all love, infinite Love. Now “infinite” you have heard before, so often that it has been pinched down into a meaningless term. But when you begin to get the savor of it, “love”, following after, is revealed to you in its full sense. Then the power of God Omniscient becomes yours. Prepare yourselves to be sons of God, rise to your full height and live most of your life in Spirit while in the material world.

... The discipline of the body and the Spirit is an exercise as old as time. The conflict of body and Spirit, joy and sorrow, has been an accompanying mystery; the dawning of man’s consciousness to light has been a way of suffering, but the journey has not been in vain, for the victories of the past are still in the race, and those who have conquered are with you and have helped to make the journey safe, to hold your spiritual Self together, to keep your divine awareness, that you might not slip into the waters of forgetfulness nor the alluring forest of false dreams of beauty. Therefore, in the insistent, dismaying clamor of need, you must invent, each for himself, his own methods – though of course the best of all ways is with life itself.

I will give you a talisman to use in times of pressure, of drabness, of temptation. Say, “There is no measured time at this place, no future, neither is there a past. I am in the eternal moment, the limitless infinite, now. My Spirit is deathless, immortal, and through It I am in touch with all wisdom, all beauty, all goodness. In this eternal now I rest sustained, supported, comforted.” All is contained in the present, eternal moment.

See your appointed position in the great concept, in this eternal moment; for you are higher than the limitless ocean, or the planet, or the planetary system, or things past or things to come. Carry in august stillness your soul as you are carried about by your body with all its slowness, weakness and tendencies which lead to oblivion. Awake to your eternal moment.

If you wear the hair shirt, fasting bread and water, and if thou saidest every day a thousand pater nosters, thou shalt not please Me so well as thou dost when thou art in silence and sufferest Me to speak to thy soul.

Margery Kemp, 13th Century

Letter 51

Lift yourselves again, lift your spirits high! It is so true that it is not a question of fighting but rather a need of lifting, offering a gay and happy spirit in worship. There is discipline required in a stand against appetites for they are subtle and return, when you are unaware, for the onslaught; and as I have said so many times, it is not only the physical appetites which tempt, but there is a greed of the tongue for those idle words of which he spoke. There are destructive satisfactions in words which fly from the tongue tinged with malice; there are appetites for self-justification and enjoyment of resentment and hot storms of anger. When we realize that there is a mental gluttony for such emotional reactions and a dark pleasure in such indulgence – then we can begin to deal with them. The next time you are tempted by any greed of body or mind, by humanly justifiable anger or quick resentment, repeat to yourself as quietly as you can his words, “I am the way!” – or just the great word, “Omniscience!” – and see how the boiling cauldron of heavy poison can be transmuted to light steam which will evaporate in the blue. You will be freed, your mind cleared, your body will feel lighter, because your Spirit has been lifted. I can promise you a great joy from such obedience, for that is true discipline; that is dominion. Will you succeed the first time? I do not know. Does that matter! Lift your Spirit and you will hear the guiding voice and know the joy that is fulfilling.

Do not be cast down by world events for much of the turmoil is beyond your comprehension; do not dwell on the angry clamor but stand in stillness with a lifted heart, for every soul can be a channel for an inpouring flood of truth and beauty and so contribute toward the victory of the Spirit.

Let us return to the image of no-man’s-land about which we have spoken before. Do you not begin to see that coming to the spiritual well through your desire is half the story? But it is very important that when you leave the revealing sustaining source you carry across this no-man’s-land into the vital personal practical conditions of everyday your well-filled water jars from the well of life. Carry your inspiration and hold it. Do not let it be spilled by the too vital interest of the outer you in its life on the outside. If a man has no source of inspiration within himself from which to gather strength and lives only in the world of appearances, he receives no help from the inner life and depends entirely upon his senses and must be forever surrounded by people and stimulated by the events of this world. But lurking in his subjective consciousness are appetites which are savage and which sweep him into all kinds of storms.

Therefore when you can cross no-man’s-land without forgetting, and keep within your spiritual world while among people, when you are at play or at work, when you are spiritually awake to this extent, then you use the savage forces to your own ends, and they are literally changed into power and inspiration for you. This is indeed dominion. This no-man’s-land must eventually disappear because you will remember it away through the continual awareness of the Presence of God.

Thou art to keep thyself in this silence and open the door so that God may communicate Himself unto thee, unite with thee, and then form thee unto Himself. The perfection of the soul consists not in speaking, nor in thinking much on God, but in loving Him sufficiently.

Miguel de Molinos, 1640-1697

Letter 52

I told you that every time you pressed your finger on a given spot the wishes of your heart would be fulfilled, you would come here and press your finger on this spot. There is reality in doing a sensuous thing that you can feel. But if I told you that you could do the same thing with your mind, at once there would be a strange barrier.

This childlike lesson illustrates the whole teaching of Christ; his Spirit must be felt as this touch is felt, then you have control. You feel this reality of the flesh, but it appears that when you are asked to touch with the mind, a lost feeling comes, because man is so constituted that it is difficult for him to shape his imagination so that it is one-pointed at this feeling of physical contact. To tell an ordinary man he can touch a spirit with his mind bewilders him; even you who have been trained in this way of life realize how far away you are from the practice of being in actual contact. And yet the traffic of daily living is carried on through thought, though even the presentation of the idea confuses the average man.

There are currents of thought that flow in all directions, and you can touch a layer, a sort of strata of impulses and be caught and held captive. An irritating presence concentrates the finger of the mind on a layer of dislike and its attending mutations. Because of the pleasure of dislike, the mind is held, the contact is easy. Again the mind touches the current of material success. You hear that success breeds success; why? Because the flush of excitement, pleasure, gaiety involuntarily keeps the finger in contact. So it is with evil; you can touch it with all the passions. In fact, once started in the negative, and more familiar layer, the concentrated finger of the mind is held fast, touching these unseen realities.

The question is, have you the will necessary to make you one-pointed toward the spiritual impulses? Perhaps not as yet; and that is why our sympathy is profound and long-suffering, because you are asked to transcend all known experience. You are asked to believe in the invisible, in something beyond all known experience. We ask you to make as real as the touching of your finger in the physical contact this other experience – and that is to keep the finger of the mind on this thought of awareness. Awareness of the Presence in oneness with your inner you; to be aware of Him about you and in every activity of your daily life. This taxes all your forces. It is hard, with everything flowing against you,

snatching at you, to do this. And yet you have already known a curious breaking through the clouds, glimpses of a great reality that can be sustained. It is as if you saw a shaft of light so golden, so crystal clear, so unlike any light of your experience that you were struck dumb, and even while you looked, it has gone, and in trying to reconstruct it you had dulled it.

But these are indeed glimpses of the Light of the Spirit; be not faint-hearted. Turn to it; stretch out the finger of your mind and touch this light; touch it, touch it all through the day and it will clear the mind of vain imagining, of fear thoughts. It will empty the subcellars of lurking fears; it will keep you from overstraining. Don't live like waltzing mice in a cage; wake up, stop wherever you are and touch with your mind this high state, this high Spirit, this light *where you are!*

Who is the master? The world or you? It is the eternal struggle; the world, so dramatic, so exciting; the Spirit, so gentle, so... still.

Not thanks, not prayer seem quite the highest or truest name for our communications with the Infinite, – but glad conspiring reception, reception that becomes giving in its turn, as the receiver is only the All-Giver in part and in infancy. I cannot, nor any man, speak precisely of things so sublime, but it seems to me the wit of man (his strength, his grace, his art) is the grace and presence of God. It is beyond explanation. When all is said and done, the rapt saint is found the only logician. Not exhortation, nor argument becomes our lips, but paeans of joy and praise... It is God in us which checks the language of petition by grander thought. In the bottom of the heart it is said: "I am, by me, O Child! this fair body and world of thine stands and grows. I am; all things are mine; and all mine are thine."

Emerson's Journal

*What is't to live, if not to pull the strings,
Of thought that pull those grosser strings whereby
We pull our limbs to pull material things
Into such shapes as in our thoughts doth lie?*

Samuel Butler, 1835-1902

Letter 53

Let us consider together this outer you, distraught, melancholy, lonely, hypnotized by his own states, without judgment, sound asleep in inertia – mental inertia. In spite of this you know now that it cannot completely possess you. You are being awakened gently, but wisely, to a realization of certain elements within you – traits which make for delay. They are superficial and are not to be dwelt upon; you are not asked at this moment to examine your faults for longer than it takes to be aware of them. The overcoming will be instant when you eliminate from your mind all thoughts and emotions which benumb, frustrate and weave cobwebs.

I am attempting to reveal to you the simplicity and beauty of the unfoldment which has been going on since this new phase has come into your life, largely through your own efforts, a thirsting after righteousness. But it will be of no value if there is too great a sense of effort, of duty to perform. It is an attempt, rather, to awaken the joyful, thrilling Spirit of quest. Meet the challenge – the dreary, seemingly meaningless challenge – of material life with joyous enthusiasm. “Knock and it shall be opened unto you”, but knock gaily! In all art, on the high selfless plateau where genius walks, those who know will tell you the path is one of seeming delays. Yet they asked with industry, and if you examine their lives you will find such industry and hard work (the actual creating) was not hard work, but a joyful knocking, asking and receiving.

Look upon these days as you would look upon a game of chess: this move, check; this move, checkmate, reset. Therefore be not too engrossed with the idea of check, but take the human disappointment and make it, by the alchemy of your Spirit, a girder in your character; give no check importance. Your journey from now on should be one of great beauty; not a seeking God out of dark jungles, coming occasionally from a human state into a divine one, but rather one where you will only be happy in His Presence and you will hardly step out of it to do your daily tasks; you will carry it with you involuntarily.

Obey your inward voice, but whatever discipline you put upon yourself, the fasting must be more joyful than the material appetite satisfied, otherwise it is a waste of time. It must give you pleasure, for by such experiences, this dedication of the befogging, dulling appetites, you will make way for living inspiration. It is of no use if you do not enjoy it more than the satisfied senses. Where are the appetites satisfied in the past of your lives? They are gone, nothing. But the spiritual knockings and attempts, however feeble, are here; they have never been lost. That is why you are where you are, though your brain and Spirit are still clogged and the instrument is too fine to be held back by the delayers, the heavy garments of appetites. And by appetites I do not mean normal enjoyments and pleasures, but those things, peculiar to each one of us, which rule us and not we them: almost anything that we cannot drop instantly when the bugle of our Spirit blows. Psychic inertia plays a part here.

And so let nothing degrade, let nothing bind, let nothing thicken you nor weigh you down. By the fun of the quest and the laying aside of these pleasurable burdens – in the bearing of which there is no freedom – your spiritual body will take on spiritual enthusiasm and power, and your physical body, health. And so remember the part you play in this must not be one of joyless drudgery; it is that through a secret prompting you follow the voice of beauty.

I worshipped Him the oftenest that I could, keeping my mind in His holy presence... I found no small trouble in that exercise, and yet I continued it... without troubling or disquieting myself when my mind wandered involuntarily... Even in the height of my business I drove away from my mind everything that was capable of interrupting my thought of Him... When we are faithful to keep ourselves in His holy presence it also begets in us a holy freedom wherewith we ask the graces we stand in need of.

Those whose spirits are stirred by the breath of the Holy Spirit go forward even in sleep. If the vessel of our soul is still tossed with winds and storms let us wake the Lord, who reposes in it, and He will quickly calm the sea.

He lays no great burden upon us; a little remembrance of Him from time to time; a little adoration; sometimes to pray for His grace, sometimes to offer Him your sorrows, and sometimes to offer Him thanks for the benefits He has given you, and still gives you, in the midst of your troubles. He asks you to console yourself with Him the oftenest you can. Lift up your heart to Him even at your meals when you are in company; the least little remembrance will always be acceptable to Him. You need not cry very loud; He is nearer than you think.

Brother Lawrence, 17th century

Letter 54

I want to send you something written by one who had great wisdom and knew suffering nearly two centuries ago: "All rests in the feelings and emotions of the heart; they are great, living currents – hot waters and cold waters, boiling, liquid emotion or iced and frozen secret feeling. How resentment freezes itself and keeps fresh and alive in ice! All is feeling – terrible, stark, animal, feeling. Transmute it with love, for love changes emotion to another state; it melts ice and changes emotion to another state; it melts ice and changes fire to the cool peace of thought. So watch the ebb and flow of emotion, and by holy concern and gentleness, you will be given mastery so that you will hold nothing in your heart that will boil or freeze. Empty thyself of feeling which is not of truth and which makes slaves of men. Resent not, anger not, allow no pestilential humors to defile thy place or fill thy day with a heaviness in thy breast; empty at once the unclean spirits which come with secret venom – it can be done. Remember, 'for Thy gentleness hath made me great'. Be on guard and watch the temptation of thy feelings to judgment; fill thyself with the guardianship of Love Itself and walk among the dark and bewildering thickets of men and women who are suffering their own burdens of malice and evil, and you will help release them; and by so much will you bring the kingdom of heaven nearer."

I am sure the time has come when you realize that by so much as you have lifted yourselves up from the subjective mud of swift emotional condemnation, criticism and resentment, so much do you realize your escape. And the time will come when these almost involuntary storms of human response will sicken you instantly; you will know that they are chains and cast them away forever. But the casting out means vigilance; it does not mean you cast them out and go about your day in lazy contentment; no, you will learn to rest in vigilance. It is a forever thrusting upward, forever reaching, expanding, growing and being everlastingly aware of that which is within in relation to that which is without, and the relation of that which is without to that which is within. You begin to see the importance of this vigil; how concentrated, how powerful, how impersonal and how stern. Indeed, it is the way of life or death every moment. And yet it is the easiest way, the happiest way; the road to eternal life. Sins are the veils and chains and heaviness that keep your feet in the swamps; fear is the great delayer, weakness the procrastinator. Fight the good fight and be shriven of all nonessentials. Catch the idle moment and retrieve it to everlasting glory and joy.

You have said that I am stern. No; but dear children, it is good to ponder on those who have disciplined themselves to mastery. We do not expect to be understood at once; it is rather that again we make comparison with the amateur, who we feel has not given full measure. Not that one must wear a hair shirt or sandals – life gives us those anyway – nor must one make a fetish or duty of this adventure, but I suggest that because the fight is so tremendous, the better trained and more disciplined the troops, the more wonderful and swift the results. These are days to travel light, to be mobile, for to be in God's Presence as a true son, it is well to be unhampered. The yoke is easy, the burden is light and

heaven is here and now if we deal with the fogs of our making that obscure our paths with sternness and in quiet. For every effort there is a great reward in joy and peace. So go thy way – perfect in intent.

I will add a postscript. No, our friend is not stern; he writes in answer to a need. Again I say it must all be without too great a sense of effort – like perfect balance or technique. Perhaps it is a little like being in love – when you had rather be in the presence of the beloved than anywhere else. Not effort, but an awareness which keeps you where you belong. For the beginning and end of life is the discovery and the holding and the making manifest the reality of the unseen Christ. How can he be made real when uninvited?

Letter 55

You are troubled because your minds are chaotic; of course they are, everyone's is at this time. No one was ever spared fear, vain imaginings, hopelessness or all the other dreary things that present themselves to challenge each valiant one who makes a stand for truth. No one is spared, and we can only repeat the same instructions and suggestions we have given you from time to time; step back into the invisible and put on your cloak of immortality. As you well know each one at intervals goes through the times of the wilderness when it seems impossible to find the well of living water, even in the moments of quietness when one goes to seek it. Know that this happens to everyone. Some of that sense of lack is due to the temporary condition of the body which rises up to confuse our minds and blur our vision. The mind is responsible for the rest of the dryness and discouragement. I do not mean just an idea, but the pressure of outer conditions upon your outer you and the manner in which you interpret the world of the senses to yourselves. Self-deceit and self-pity go hand in hand and suck one dry of inspiration. They will stand in the pathway and confuse your progress. But do not strain nor make a mountain of your heaviness of Spirit; keep the balance, for when down in the heavy flesh the subtle body tempts the soul with a sense of defeat. Then is the time to lift up gaily and press on.

Another secret is to fill your reservoirs with light in times of well-being, so that when unease to body or mind steals in like a thief, you have the defense of the sword of the Spirit which is light indeed. Here is a hint. You think you desire to put aside a small part of each day for the divine appointment, and yet your mental appetites make it impossible of accomplishment. Many of your defenses are down, not through bodily discomforts, but through an unordered rhythm. To some this idea of order irritates the mind, but that is a false suggestion from your outer you; for order, alertness, awareness of the divine companion is rest.

Do not make this a task; it is merely bringing order out of chaos. Begin the day by speaking his words, for this washes away stains from the outer you as you would wash your body; it brings the inner you to the fore, that inner you that will teach you. You have within you the power to make your days brilliant.

On thy brow, on thy lips, in thy ears, in thy heart is the Word. Keep thyself gentle and tender, for it is the way of peace.

Are we, in pursuing the mystical outlook, facing the hard facts of experience? Surely we are. I think that those who would wish to take cognizance of nothing but the measurements of the scientific world made by our sense-organs are shirking one of the most immediate facts of experience, namely, that consciousness is not wholly, nor even primarily a device for receiving sense-impressions.

Science and the Unseen World,
Arthur Stanley Eddington, 1882-1944

Letter 56

Strange and surprising elements are in all of us, beyond our understanding and largely unknown to us – wisely so, for we can only bear the knowledge when revealed to us little by little. Therefore when you find yourselves storming and fretful, tempted to despair by an unexpected revelation, examine it coolly and then pray. Prayer and intelligence, intelligence and prayer. Out of the race have come sayings so supercharged with truth that you would be awakened in a flash if you were sensitive enough to realize their full content. One is, “God helps those who help themselves” and it has become such a commonplace that hardly anyone hears it. But if you can hear it, you will receive deep satisfaction. The questioning, the self-examination, is not a fretful conscience nor a stricken, anxious tidying of the mind. It should be rather a simple question, “Have I this day realized who I am, where I am going, how much have I listened? How much have I realized? Is my shield polished to hold off the poisoned arrows of life’s dangers and alarms? Can I hold my soul within my soul? Can I be awake to the divine whisper or am I sound asleep? Am I strong, built on a foundation of silence? Am I myself, a son of God, one-pointed, using the wisdom, the knowledge and the inspiration vouchsafed me to live with my fellow men in the troublesome world of confusion, despair and baffling mysteries? Am I vigilant, so that when false or sly emotion and sentimentalities sweep over me I can rise above them and see them revealed in all their dangers? What do I want, then? What is my journey? How far have I stepped this day, this hour?”

These questions are some of the safe tools; clear and clean your minds with them, and you will indeed be illumined and safe in a terrifying world.

Simple exercises are good for this time, and simple images are quieting to the mind. Stand naked, free of all things, greeds and appetites; keep a balance, but keep free of all things. Even while working in groups, keep free of entangling details; keep faithful with quiet; every moment counts. Allow no treachery of thought; walk in the garments of immortality now; keep invisible and indeed have no vain imaginings of fear or doubt. Trusting is part of your role; trust in peace, merriment and confidence. Wear garments of joy without fearful anticipations. Look upon the quiet of the hills, early morning light, a candle untroubled by the wind and let them be to you reminders of your task. Keep in the very center, safe and a power for victory, healing and peace. Keep aware of eternal values as compared to relative values. Keep your naked intent and never forget your direction. By this one thing is meant, live in the awareness of love of Christ for you, for by so doing you obey his word and give light and peace to the world through him.

Let the soul banish all that disturbs; let the body that envelops it be still, and all the frettings of the body, and all that surrounds it; let earth and sea and air be still, and heaven itself. And then let the man think of the Spirit as streaming, pouring, rushing and shining into him from all sides while he stands quiet.

Plotinus, A.D. 205

Letter 57

You can completely dissolve and blow away the cloud of anxiety if by your concentrated one-pointedness you keep aware of the power of the Spirit. Let there be an awareness so deep it is as if it were in the center of a block of granite, secretly hidden, but held fast. The discomfort of fear will naturally discipline you to be one-pointed by the force of its attack – so be one-pointed first. At this time be determined, with all your forces, to be more aware of your inner spiritual companionship and protection; stand aware of your invincible godhood in the Christ within; then fear will recede and order will come in its place. But you must not be half awake mentally. Those who win do not deviate; and so your energies at this life-creating moment must be used to keep yourself undisturbed in God's power. Do not let the moments go by you unlighted.

You sometimes wonder why certain things are given you to bear; do not, for it is a waste of time. Put your desire, your pent-up feeling, into the pure desire of being with Him, and watch during the day the extraordinary waste of thinking that unmans and weakens. It is the discipline of one's thoughts that matters, the turning inward and resting in that deep center where all is still and safe and sure. Great is the companionship and the peace of so doing, and be sure you know you are doing your best.

Receive in quiet the assurance of your protection.

The flowing out of God always demands a flowing back.

Ruysbroeck

Wherefore when you find yourself in this confidence with our Lord, stay there without moving yourself to make sensible acts, either of the understanding or the will; for this simple love of confidence and this zest of the spirit... contains by excellence all that you go hither and thither to satisfy your taste. It is better to rest here than to watch elsewhere.

St. Francis de Sales, 1567-1622

Contemplation is a perception of God or of divine things; simple, free, penetrating, certain, proceeding from love and tending to Love.

Louis Lallemant, 1587-1635

Letter 58

Today we will have a primer talk. What is confusing to you, I imagine, is that you have not quite understood what takes place when you place a new thought, a sun-thought, in the galaxy which makes your identity, especially such powerful ones as you have been given. You do not take, as it were, a new concept in your hands, place it in the midst of the familiar galaxy and expect a sudden radiance, an immediate change, although I do not forget that instant revelation and realization have come to some of the great ones who have walked this way. No, like all good things this work begins humbly. It is like planting a seed that grows and grows for a time in the dark. Ideas that have been given you in these communions are in movement and as they grow larger and larger, they push into oblivion the older ideas which were foolish and out of proportion. This is difficult to put into words, but it may help you not to be too introspective.

When you meditate or abide in your quiet times of communion, you do not charge in and do something, like saying, "I will now be good and move mountains by my act of faith". No, you water your garden, knowing that these ideas are growing into a heavenly garden; the indwelling Spirit doeth the work, not you; you merely water it. Do you not see the comfort there is in that? I can tell you in primer language that a very gentle, calm, unemotional, selfless and patient attitude toward your spiritual growth is essential – such as all old

gardeners know. They know that patience, hoeing, watering and a certain order, a quiet rhythm, bring a birth a heavenly beauty.

How to do this in your particular, demanding, galloping tempo is difficult; but I will, in primer language, give you suggestions. In the morning, I sit down to my breakfast and I eat my food; this is a voluntary action. I do not think about what is happening, but strength is being given me; life is being sustained; a great miracle has taken place. In the same way, your words and thoughts are transmuted, for the food you give your mind also becomes flesh, as well as part of your identity as an individual. Your part is your acceptance or rejection, and what you accept becomes a growth of some kind in your garden. But let us go further and see how we can use these everyday things to help us to greater awareness of the abiding Presence in our lives, to help us to dominion over our earth-consciousness. Let us not only recognize that we find an analogy in our earthly life, but let us use each thing that comes as a reminder.

In this rebirth into self-conscious realization of your godhood, take the homely common simple actions and make them follow the same law on a higher plane. I eat and drink in remembrance of Him eternally alive in me; it is a profound communion and a great practical help. As you eat the bread of life spiritually with the bread materially, your inspiration will strengthen you for the day. As I have told you, this is a primer lesson, for what is needful for you is to keep in contact with the Spirit, to make the habit of doing so. And you yourselves will change by forming the habit of tenderness toward common things, the habit of communing and bringing down into everyday actions the heavenly grace. Everything you touch, feeling the warmth of an open fire, is an outward and visible witness of the spiritual law. Bathe in water as you would in Spirit. Water is the source of life; it is a spiritual symbol. Let the shock of it on your flesh be a reminder of your contact with the invisible faith within you. Use your imagination and be like that humble friar, Brother Lawrence, or the great artists of all time, who took the humble simple things close to them and transfigured them and themselves. For spiritual awakening allies you to the great poets and artists. Such is the wonder and the grandeur of the Spirit, its transforming and glamorous beauty.

Gradually these ideas, these thoughts that have entered through your spiritual heart will grow as involuntarily as the food you eat is taken care of without effort, and the inner you will manifest so gently that, as you go into the world, your feet will be led to walk beside the watered garden of your own making. Illumine the common things and you will fill your skies with stars. Go, seeking goodness and you will find it; seeking beauty and it will be upon your face. Thus will you walk the glorious way, using the common elements of daily life as rods and staffs. Nothing is too small for your consideration and for your use.

There – I have spoken for children tonight in this primer. Contact, was my text. “Do this in remembrance of me.” Do all things in remembrance of Him – remember your way out!

I will add a postscript, for children in eagerness sometimes run too far ahead. Do not feel yourself a slave to this idea, for the mind is so constructed that if you drive it with spur and bridle, it will balk. Remember always with joy and never with strain or boredom, for love only can find the way.

And look that nothing remain in thy working mind but a naked intent stretching upon God – not clothed in any special thought of God in himself or any of his works, but only the He is as He is... Forsake good thoughts as well as evil thoughts. He asks no help but only thyself. He will thou do but look upon Him and let Him alone.

The Cloud of Unknowing, 14th Century

*Man is not a star, but a quick coal
Of mortal file;
Who blows it not, nor doth control
A faint desire
Lets his own ashes choke his soul.*

*Life is a business, not good cheer;
Ever in wars.
The sun still shineth there or here,
Whereas the stars
Watch an advantage to appear.*

*Oh that I were an orange-tree
That busy plant!
Then should I ever laden be,
And never want
Some fruit for Him who dressed me.*

Georg Herbert, 1593-1632

Letter 59

Since the beginning, it has always been a question of minus or plus, spiritual or material, light or darkness. Everyone who has made a stand and called upon the unseen to reveal itself goes through the backing and filling on the borderline between the two. For every act of faith, there is a challenging fear. The outer you is naturally dismayed by the turmoil, and we are here to bear witness that like the steady captain on the bridge in the storm, you must face it and be confident in the unseen. Your growing intelligence makes you realize that you cannot afford to let go and be swept into chaos. You *can* hold your universe together. There is an ebb and flow of hope and disappointment; courage followed by fear and weariness. But be of good cheer, for your very realization and intent at this moment is a reward.

I have often told you that the running of the race is more important than the race. Many have had to run it over hot sands and have brought the Spirit of Christ down to make a stream of living water in a wilderness. Take the whole dare and yield to faith; that is all that lifts a man out of the herd. Say, "Christ is my refuge, my comforter, the supplier of my needs. He changes water into wine; he gives me my daily bread and lifts my Spirit with his own." Believe that you can translate your godhood, your love of God, through Christ into a daily miracle.

It is hard to smile with happy faith, I know, when the heart is being clutched at and terror is a dark sky for scenery. But at least you have this evidence, that you turned to your Father in time, and the very turning to Him for strength gives strength. That is an act of God.

Be still and cool in thy own mind and spirit from thy own thoughts, and then thou wilt feel the principle of God to turn thy mind to the Lord from whom cometh life; whereby thou mayest receive the strength and power to allay all storms and tempests.

The Diary of George Fox

I said to heaven in the beginning when there was no night, that there must be purity of thought.

One may heal with holiness, one may heal with the law, one may heal with the knife, one may heal with herbs, one may heal with the Holy Words; amongst all remedies this one is the healing one that heals with the Holy Word.

Zoroastrian Scriptures

Letter 60

Yes, it is true; the outer you hears as through a veil, but the inner you translates the delicate suggestions of serene timeless peace, understands the message of the Word whenever it is spoken. That is why we are sometimes confused and mistaken in a personality which at once understands the message in all its fullness. We begin to hear more clearly when our desires, those quick almost involuntary desires that reach out before thought clears in the mind. For this reason, beware of heavy habits, for where a habit is fastened upon you, it is a sign of thickness; instead, realize that every moment has power within it and that with every heartbeat, with every breath, you can be lifted out of the prison of a negative personality through co-operation with the indwelling Spirit. Be not dismayed; know that your Redeemer liveth and that you can know God. See Him in everything; and you do not have to make an effort to see Him, for He is with you in every act, and you are hearing Him when you make the wise choice in times of decisions. Remember, too, that in every second of the day you are making decisions – not upon what you shall do, but what the mind is accepting or rejecting, going forward or back, up or down. For this reason, we are trying to help you practice the Presence of God, and this must not be done as a pleasant and comforting ritual to be used only when you are under stress; it is the gift of the Spirit to be realized with joy, to be known as a renewing power, to be understood as our only life, for through it man comes into his godhood. It is the pathway for the spiritual evolution of the race – and Jesus taught no other. You have a gigantic task; do not belittle it. Do not too much talk at or about great truths instead of realizing your divine gifts. How easily we blame circumstances; how frequently we hear (with profound sympathy from our own travail) the tragic cry, “Why, oh why?” And yet how seldom do we hear within ourselves those words which hold so explicitly the condition of free will, “Because he hath set his heart upon me, I will deliver him”; “if ye abide in me and my words abide in you ye shall ask what ye will and it will be done unto you”; “he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit”; and “in that day shall this song be sung... thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee.”

I will finish now with a quotation from one of long ago; “For our Lord shall be in thy side ready and nigh to thine help, and He shall keep thy foot (that is the ascending of thy love by which thou goest to God) so that thou shalt not be taken by subtlety nor guile of thine enemies – the world and the flesh. Lo! friend, thus shall our Lord and our Love, mightily, wisely and goodly succor, keep and defend all those that for lovely trust that they feel in Him will utterly forsake the keeping of themselves.”

He brought light out of darkness, not out of a lesser light; he can bring thy summer out of winter, though thou have no spring; though in the ways of fortune or understanding or conscience, thou have been benighted till now, wintered and frozen, clouded and eclipsed, damped and benumbed, smothered and stupified till now, now God comes to thee, not as in the dawning of the day, not as in the bud of the spring, but as the sun at noon.

John Donne, 1573-1631

Letter 61

The confusing aspect of your progression is often due to the fact that your conception of how events should be shaped is never fully realized your way; they are largely influenced by your emotional states and your thoughts. It is hard for you to see this, being in the midst of details which are insistent and pressure which is immediate. As we have said before, use the little things in your daily life as reminders; if a bell rings, a clock strikes the hour, stop for a moment and say, "Where am I at this moment? Am I in a state of ignorance, of tension, in a heavy place? Or am I reaching upward, purifying my whole nature through my listening Spirit so that the burdens of obstruction will not be in my path?" For that is how to melt your way through your difficulties; it is the way of peace and not the way of war. Much is said today of the horror of war between nations, but I tell you that the private wars in the darkness of the human consciousness are no less violent and alarming, and they eventually become manifest in injury to oneself as well as to others. It is time to face this, and it is why we tell you over and over to keep gentle within, to "leave all quietly to God" and to awake to your godhood and to be Godlike, Christlike in your feeling toward your fellow men. The ungentle way is war, and is never victory. Remember that evil is that which is out of balance, and he that is out of balance cannot achieve, as you desire to achieve. Keep your balance by not plunging into thoughts of terror, of suspicion and criticism, for he cannot walk in the company of such thoughts. You have at last reached the place where you sense a sustaining love, a protecting Spirit; be more and more confident that the work of the Father is always done within first, and keep your divine balance so that when events come to trouble you, you will not be weak and your thoughts scattered and uncontrolled. Be encouraged by the thought that there is an involuntary life going on within you, a healing is taking place, a freeing from dark emotions because you have asked to go the divine way. Let in the light to shine upon your anxieties, to shine upon each problem and be divinely expectant always.

One of you says, "I was swept into the outer circle, thoughts of resentment and foreboding, of pride and fear pulled me down." Nay, do not be too much hurt. Step back, sit down quietly and a table will be set before thee in the presence of those enemies. Listen, listen for your very life! Learn this utter stillness so that he can come in times like these; even lay aside the remembrance of these

thoughts and rest with your whole mind and soul on the surety of the Shepherd's guiding hand; follow happily through the valley of shadows; follow with full trust; bless each moment and purify it. Challenge each concept; remove the dross before accepting, and in this state of holy awareness time will dissolve, pressure will be lifted, doubt released and ye shall be free indeed. Go with a tender step, giving unto others what has been given to you.

I beseech thee for to draw us up... to the height of thy dark inspired speakings where all things of divinity be covered and hid under the sovereign-shining darkness of wisest silence.

St. Denis, 13th Century

The order of the world is no accident. There is nothing actual which could be actual without some measure of order. The religious insight is the grasp of this truth: That the order of the world, the depth of reality of the world... the beauty of the world, the zest of life, and the mastery of evil, are all bound together – not accidentally, but by reason of this truth; that the universe exhibits a creativity with infinite freedom, and a realm of forms with infinite possibilities: but that this creativity and these forms are together impotent to achieve actuality apart from the ideal harmony, which is God.

Alfred Lord Whitehead, 1861-1947

Letter 62

Make the habit of worship in every act of your daily life; and by that I do not mean a solemn duty but rather an overtone of feeling, a high clear note which you sound at the beginning of each day and which you can half consciously hold while occupied with the varying and often humdrum scales of your many activities. There is no other exercise that will so control the subconscious emotional states which can quickly precipitate you into discord and violence. Worship, and allow no alarm to magnify itself. Worship is a giving out of love to the holy Spirit, to God, to Christ, our eternal companion, and with it comes a warming sense of companionship; it is, as one has said, "a witness to His glory". Let the inner you "banish all that disturbs; let the body which envelops it be still, and all the frettings of the body and all that surrounds it; let earth and sea and air be still, and heaven itself. And then let the man think of the Spirit as streaming, pouring, rushing and shining into him from all sides while he stands quiet." This, my children, is worship.

All that is asked of you is to be childlike in your devotions and illumination, in the highness of your thought. When reality hardens the human Spirit and there is a space of time that is like a desert, and the memory of illumination is so clouded by the daily life you cannot recall it to be an oasis in the dry sand, which at the moment stretches to your horizon; then, to use an old phrase, take yourself in hand, for as one says, "With thinking we may be beside ourselves in a sane sense. By a conscious effort of the mind we can stand aloof from actions and their consequences, and all things good or bad, go by us like a torrent." Then is the time to recall to your remembrance what you have received and to hold the lamp of vision high; this is the work of the inner you and it will never fail if you will make the effort.

You may have the experience of finding that the thoughts of your outer you will try to march over you like an army; but cling to your intent, release yourself from the sense of past and future in time, and receive. Let each moment come, strong, illumined, as cool as water to quench your thirst, breath to your nostrils in the heavy air, and health and peace to your body. Picture the Spirit within you, to which you turn, as a calm inward flame; your quietly holding It is what is important. Meditation is discovering It, releasing It, acknowledging It in all the ways of your life. You are actually hung in space by pure thought; you are not a boy corporeal; that is not the reality, that is the stumbling experiment. You are deathless, true, divinely breathing eternity as you go. So stay within and let all things without resolve. Have confidence; be patient with genius; burst into a light of patience!

Rest, then, in a divine suspension, bring the invisible into the visible; His is the only victory. Abide in Him in the quiet of overtone feelings and remember that "He hath given me a being as wide as eternity".

When thou purposest thee to this work, lift up thy heart of Him with a stirring of love... and receive none other thought of God, for a naked intent directed unto Him without any other cause than Himself, sufficeth wholly.

The Cloud of Unknowing, 14th Century

Letter 63

In reply to your need, I must say what I have already said so often, that simplicity of approach is what you require at the moment; if you could only know how simple, how tender, how radiant is the feeling of oneness with your indwelling Spirit! I shall try and compare it to a very human experience. When you were in love, your imagination was held captive by the one you loved and your whole tone was uplifted to the object. Often the image of your beloved was more real than the actual person, who was as unreal and as unseen as I am at this moment as I write to you. I can only repeat that to receive the sense of the love of the Spirit, to receive the divine wisdom and knowledge, you must truly ponder and meditate and hold the high image steady and true, as you so involuntarily held that human image of your beloved.

It is true that you are at the place of your desire, that you want this infinite peace and comfort in a troubled world, and it is difficult, with the interests and alarms of the day to return to a quiet moment of communion like the one of this moment, as you read; it is hard to conjure up in your mind the quality of feeling your mind is now touching. But if you were really in love, you would not have to search for this feeling; that involuntary emotion would tone your whole day, the trees would take on a richer hue, the skies clear, and even the people in the street would seem endowed with nobility, because that emotion would of itself clasp and hold high the very jewel of your heart's desire. The materialist knows this and he would say that it is impossible to live in the tempo of youth's first love, and yet I say to you that this is the way and the truth and the life.

You will grow to love the beauty and the clarification of the revelations that will come to you, and you will learn gradually that this peace, calm knowledge and inspiration are part of the rebirth that has been the prophecy through the ages for all those who walk this path, the prophecy fulfilled through love. Is not this peace; is not this powerful knowledge; is not this love with all that you can give?

And remember that the more tender, the more open, the gentler you can be in your quiet time of acceptance, of stillness, the greater will be the power pressed through your silences.

I would again bring to your remembrance that you can love your way out of all seeming frustration; by loving to be silent, by loving to tune the infinitely delicate instrument of your mind to its high purpose. I hear you say, "Oh, why does it not work?" *It has* worked in precisely the same measure of the loving you have put into it.

In quiet listen to the Spirit within you speak:

My will in thee is joy, not sorrow.
My will in thee is faith, not fear.
My will in thee is awareness of My love for thee;
Let My will within thee be done.

*Truly, it is Life that shines forth in all things!
Vast, heavenly, of unthinkable form, it shines forth...
It is farther than the far, yet near at hand.
Set down in the secret place of the heart...
Not by sight is it grasped, not even by speech,
But by the peace of knowledge, one's nature purified –
In that way, by meditating, one does behold Him who is without form.*

The Upanishads

Letter 64

The mystery of development reaches so far back it is difficult to explain and to understand; the blessed thing is that you have come into the realization of the spiritual adventure and that your intent is forward. Your body, too, will be freed from much heaviness; in the crystal clearness of your new world you will breathe in health. All that goes on within you, the multitude of things that beat and move, the pilgrimage of the blood to the heart, the refreshment of sleep and all the traffic and business of the corporeal self will be conducted with greater ease and lightness. The push of divine life, the celestial instinct that doth pierce thy worldly inertia – all is from the same source; it pushes through the reluctant outer self which would sit and wail and rub ashes in its hair.

Can you stand and think in perfect stillness that you are but the expression of the long thrust upward of an idea, casting off all weights, all heavy feelings in the realization of the upward flight? Cast off everything; be the forward part of the thrust, illumined, your light breaking forth from within. Such imagery will help you to realize the power within you, if in the same thought you are aware of the source of that Light. And remember that those who thrust upward are often dismayed by their errors. That is part of the high adventure, for those who win must not look to the right nor to the left; in great height do not look down. Do not curse yourself or bewail. There are many strange faces and subtle masks that present themselves to all upon this journey; there are the whisperers who bring the temptations of fear and doubt. Keep in the thrust and you shall be freed and given the strength and power for your journey. Rest on this and be comforted, for if you turn to look and listen you will fall into the descending spiral round and round descending, saying, "I am this, I am that, I should have done other things..." Nay, look straight before thee, for thou art one-

pointed and all who come nigh thee shall be lifted also. This is for thee, my child; for thy mind, thy soul, thy body. Live in eternity, the ever-present.

In the idea of victory there is power; in the word "victory" there is also a sense of effort, but in this new way, rest in the idea of victory which is being won for you through your stand. Rest in the serenity, the clarity of your inspiration, knowing that you are being freed. Let go your outer you, keep in touch with the inner you which is quick, alive and at secret attention. There is no strain in this for it is the peace of perfect order and balance; step forth and stand in light; stand as on spiritual parade!

There are those who say, "I am not one of those extraordinary souls, I have no mystical gifts, I do not aspire to such things, I will keep the common way", and persuade themselves that that is the spirit of their vocation. To them I say, No; you haven't experienced these unions and heard these high calls to God and perhaps that is why it is so difficult to calm you when you are put out by some little thing, as when you are slighted. If you had a higher understanding of perfection and if you looked always to Him and found comfort in Him you might be admitted to these unions that make the heart so strong nothing can disturb it.

John Joseph Surin, 1600-1665

Were I asked why, seeing that so many people have undertaken the direct service to God, there are so few saints, I would answer that the chief reason is that they have given too big a place in life to indifferent things.

John Joseph Surin, 1600-1665

Only actions done in God bind the soul of a man.

The Upanishads

Letter 65

Today I want to speak to you about faith, and a perfect faith; that beneficent, uplifting Spirit. Let us symbolize it as a child in happy surroundings, protected and loved, going about its delightful affairs upon a bright day, attracted by gay flowers and friendly animals. It suddenly trips upon a stone and is cast upon its face, meeting hard reality. It is set upon its feet, washed and comforted; soon the pain leaves and happy things blot out the memory of pain. High spirits raise it to a state of excitement until it comes sharply upon ugliness, a dead animal, and terror enters its heart. I won't go on with this and how faith is forever challenged by malice, fear and disappointment from without and from within.

Now, the happy child in you is the supreme state, and the task before you is to learn that the hurts and the disappointments are not for the child; they are to be overcome by instinct for joy which is your heritage and the pearl of great price; the natural instinct for joy which is to become the joyful awareness of spiritual oneness with Him and the realization of the power therefrom. Joy is the conquering element and that is why it is deceiving, for we have smothered our feeling of right to it with outworn traditions and false standards of duty. The smiling Spirit of faith, childlike and trustful, denying through the integrity of its trust all evidence of despair, is the complete freedom from the hurt of the stones, the flinty ground, the tragedy of death and the ills of mortality. Rediscover the Child within you, for when your "energies shall come in like a flood", he will teach you "to lift up a standard against them".

If I think my source is diluted and muddled, my supply of water will not be clear. If I do not believe that the infinite Spirit is perfection, that it is unallowed goodness and beauty, I shall not receive unmixed goodness and beauty. If I do not believe that the principle of proportion can give balance and order, I cannot use it to give me those results.

If I "ask" believing that something besides joy can come from the Giver, I shall not receive pure joy. If when I "knock" I am doubtful of Him who stands the other side of the door, I shall not find my Friend. If I am suspicious of His gifts, they will not be the gifts I need.

If I hold doubt between me and faith, I shall not be free from the results of fear.

But if I open to receive, with perfect faith that only goodness can come from Goodness, confident as a child that I shall be given what I most grievously need, then, and then only, my cup runneth over.

There is within us a power that could lift the world out of its ignorance and misery if we only knew how to use it, if we would seek and find. When you meditate, open not only your listening mind, but the other door of your mind as well, so that the spirit streams out as fast as it comes in. Store nothing... A tree grows not by the pulling of the sun only, but by the richness of the soil... go into the clam and luminous silence to renew, but stay in the soil of your life. No, there is nothing to fear. Do not waste time wishing for peace; there is no peace in a world, there is only peace in one's own soul. Get more fearless peace into your souls and then you will be some good.

Letter from J. P. M.

Letter 66

You are beginning to comprehend the vitality of your thoughts; how they will race and clash and confuse and tire the orderly rhythm of one's living, day and night. Thoughts can seize and fasten onto the consciousness. Now take boldly the role of the commander; calm these unruly soldiers in your company by commands, by great words of spiritual intent. As you were warned, do not go down with the stream; remain at the source, the source within you. Be the eternal spring. This indeed is a task for a man, but here is the victory won. Perhaps words like these will help you; say, to yourself, "I am a messenger. I will not waste my life on the letter, but I will seek the Spirit and hold myself at the source. I will obey the word; I will not be delayed in the treadmill of human, negative thought. I will escape all useless mental anxiety. Lord, here I stand, obeying Thy words, knowing that in obeying the divine command my burden will be lifted." Lean, lean therefore on thy strong reassuring inner Self, realizing that in obedience God's will is done to the end of time. Nothing is too small, nothing too large. "Say not lo, here! nor lo, there!" Nor be dragged here and there and about, for indeed the kingdom of all peace and power is within you. Stay – and advance!

Try dissolving your universe, as you have been told before, into spiritual and mental concepts; consider yourself a feeling that has been led about by the events of your time. Character is, in its last analysis, a collection of feelings. A good man is a trust-feeling. If you dissolve all people to thought and examine your own thought as you carry it about, you will see with greater clarity how destructive it is to be a Fear. If you are a Fear, you at once become a vortex which attracts to you currents of obstacles and blockings. But if you are a Confidence going though the unseen, as your true world really is, if you are a Spirit of courage, calm and loving, you act like a sun on all about you, and grateful faces will turn to you as you touch the creative impulse everywhere. It is as simple as this. Guard yourself from states, and when you find yourself sinking into one and you stand before the walls of your Jericho, blow your silver bugle and your clear

note of prayer will be heard. Great and good forces are your companions; you do not walk alone, Christ is in your heart.

How little are the blind men; come within that your eyes may be opened and you may see. Stretch your identity; widen your faith; lift your mind and keep out all material and entangling thoughts – let them dissolve and fall like sediment. Take not thought; be thought; “have the mind of Christ”.

It is good to tame the mind, which is often difficult to hold in and flighty, rushing wherever it listeth; a disciplined mind brings happiness.

Buddhist Scriptures

Letter 67

When you are in communion in the pivotal place, in the center where your safety lies, you are in balance, for this is the plumb bob that does not sway in the midst of alternating violence and peace. It keepeth all in quietness, steady and true. When you are here, you are here in the center of the storm; keep to this point, timeless, immortal and omniscient. This is too transcendent for you to grasp except at fleeting moments like this, but be faithful in intent and all you need will be revealed to you.

There are simple exercises that may help you; sometimes lie still in silence when you are tired and feel the earth turning under you, the universe of stars above and below, held together by this serene force that is within yourself. Lie there and receive in silence, and let the light shine through every cell of your flesh and bones and say “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.” Again, think of your heart as the center of the universe and let it say “Light!” with every heartbeat; or when you find yourself walking, as it were, to your destruction, come to a halt and say these words, “I am aware of thee, that thou are beside me”, and then walk with Him wherever you go.

These are but exercises, but they can be important. Put all your faith in this secret-holding companionship and you will be astonished. It is becoming as a child.

Yes, this is a time to be aware of this great birth, baneful though it be. Hold yourselves to Yourselves; be spiritually tough, indeed be holy. No compromise; and do not keep this as a sort of sanctimonious concept to turn to vaguely. Take the dare and converse with God. Ask Him simply and bring Him into your life, and you will then not blank out so often. Once there was an ancient king who, upon the day of his coronation felt that all his hopes had come to fulfillment, for he was crowned after many years of waiting, king of a great realm. As he sat in the cathedral in his vestments, his orb and scepter in his hands, his

crown upon his head, he saw a fault in the uniform one of his generals was wearing, and his mind was taken to that, and he forgot that he was at the great moment of his life, and the moment passed by for him.

Try not to let these ephemeral, impinging, daily pinpricks steal away your immortality, which you can begin to know now, for this is your great moment, now... now... now. Now is the time of thy salvation, and salvation means safe return. Arise and shine for thy light has come.

Listen, or thy tongue will keep thee deaf.

American Indian

The Disciple said to his Master: Sir, how may I come to the spiritual life so that I may know God and hear Him speak?

The Master answered: Son, when thou canst throw thyself into that where no creature dwelleth, though it be but for a moment, then thou hearest what God speaketh.

Disciple: Is that where no creature dwelleth near at hand or is it afar off?

Master: It is in thee... If thou dost once every hour throw thyself by faith beyond all creatures, beyond and above all sensual perception... yea above discourse and reasoning, into the abyssal mercy of God, then thou shalt receive power from above to rule over death and sin.

Jacob Boehme, 1575-1624

Letter 68

The time has come to lift the very Spirit of you into the current of faith; it is indeed a current, a mighty, creative, creating, recreating, revivifying mood which, when reached, will set free an active joyous inspiration beyond your conception. You cannot keep the Spirit disincarnate if you abide in it. This power has touched the great ones of the earth; it has changed the tide of battle, for it is inward strength; it is courage; it has a hundred names. Keep in the current of faith, the tone of faith, for it is the tone of morale. Create the atmosphere of achievement, creative expectancy. Forbid all negative impatience, for in this mood is high hope and assuring trust. It is an uplifting form of communion free from the heat, noise and confusion of human personality. It is augustly impersonal; it is divine order; it is perfect balance and can only be reached by the discipline of appetites – appetites for anger and criticism, resentment and self-justification. You can be led far afield by angry strangers and your own desire to present your outer personality favorably. It is the old enemy, the egotist; from selflessness within to sudden self without is a sharp change! Faces, voices,

chameleonlike personalities confuse and alter your whole scale of values abruptly in the outside world. The mind can trip and sprawl when caught by the snatching, insistent difficulties of daily living. There is a zero hour for all who hold high their thought, their vision – waiting to meet the temptation of fear with courage. But as we have told you many times, courage is your only safety. Practice the little tests as you would practice putting into use any useful knowledge, and the more you do this, the more are you saved “ordeals by fire”, for you acquire a strength which will not fail, through the sense of your daily companionship with Him who walks with you, whose strength you use, whose power is yours for the asking, whose mightiness is illumination and whose gentleness can make you great.

I am thy holy Spirit of inspiration within thee, I am thy power to fulfill it.

Anonymous

Letter 69

When trapped by walls of disappointment and tempted to panic by disordered thinking, calmness is the only solution for men; for the acts of Providence are so hidden it is hard to understand how delicate are the influences emanating from you, from your minds. There are great changes that come about in the darkest hours when there is no hope and the encircling gloom is terrifying to the heart, and it is difficult for the human to understand the power at the moment. Calmness in the midst of chaos, serenity in the midst of feverish activity is the secret that all commanders must know – the secret revealed in crises, that the soul that is calm with controlled emotion is performing an act of faith; the easier you play the game of fortitude, the more relaxed you become to each challenge of impatience, the more you control your destiny. To do this, you must remember your way back into the very center of your being, to that eternal fountain with refreshment within. Otherwise you block, frustrate and delay, for a frantic Spirit is a stupid one. It is a hard lesson when it should be the softest. Let us consider it for a moment; you believe that you are sons of God; you hold the vision of your godhood. The human, bewildered, tired, impatient self can only glimpse this in moments far apart, as you call time. You can only reach God in stillness, in calmness. What is a week, a month in this august destiny? Play the part nobly and refuse this frantic littleness; stand and wait. Harassed and shaken I knew all those relentless bedfellows. Be comforted, be comforted and learn that destinies are controlled by the delicacy of your calmness within, by your turning to the divine companion who never leaves nor forsakes thee. I would recall to you your first thoughts when it was told to you that through contemplative stillness you would be able to reach God, that through this silence your inward and secret light would be revealed to you. So now, in times like this, I bring you this remembrance; it is the same, it is the good news, the ever-present revelation.

You cannot and will not reach what you desire through emotional explosions; you know this – now obey. Come where the eternal Spirit, Love itself, entangles, loosens and pulls away from you all that binds, for it unshackles these imprisoning chains, these iron bands of thought and silences the gongs of fear and dismay.

In your outer active life, translate humble things into divine things; use this actual outside living as a way to God. Take the serene and timeless peace of a great mountain; feel its vast serenity when you write a letter or stamp an envelope or perform what seems to you very unimportant labors. Bring the divine power into actual life and beautify it.

So peace be unto your hearts and great stillness and calm. Seek this creative peace within; here there is no struggle. Here are beauty and truth and protection and joy in abundance. Here is order; and here, locked away, is the divine plan. When you dissolve and become still, holy in that oneness with the infinite holiness, the divine plan cometh to pass and you are free. You are challenged out there; in here the challenge is defeated. Seek and worship the Father.

You are a distinct portion of the essence of God; and contain part of Him in yourself. Why, then, are you ignorant of your noble birth? Why do you not consider whence you came? Why do you not remember, when you are eating, who you are who eat; and whom you feed? Do you not know that it is the Divine you feed; the Divine you exercise? You carry a God about with you, poor wretch, and know nothing of it.

Epictetus, A.D. 50

Letter 70

It is a good thing to place sentinels around your mind, for when it is unguarded, it slips away and emotions rush the gate and take command. There is nothing wrong with the human race except destructive emotions. You cannot be attacked except through the strength or weakness of emotional ups and downs. This in itself sounds fearful, and if we walk the common road, it is fearful indeed. The secret is to lean on no one but your inner Self, through which you touch the tenderness and the power of the almighty Spirit.

You know that you have been protected from many things and old sores have been healed. For the future, the great thing is not to accept a destiny which appears dark before you, thus making it real and inevitable; but rather step aside lightly and go your way, laughing. Do not accept! Step aside and bring down light into your human darkness. It may be a delicate thing to do with so faint a result as only changing a mood from a conviction of hopelessness to one of doubt; a negative victory, to be sure, but you will have risen from minus to zero, at least. This is the way to heal the constant ache and recurring fear, and “stepping aside” is taking the ache within and melting it by your receptive awareness of the all-suffusing peace that abides there.

When you turn within, release your imagination from ordinary concepts; let it take wing in as many varying images of reassurance as will rise to comfort you; the mind will finally grasp the one you need at the moment and hold to it. Lift up thine eyes unto the hills and peace will come on healing wings, and you shall walk by still waters. This is not “wish-fulfillment” any more than giving into images that bring temptation to succumb to fear; and the effects can be judged in the lives and characters of those who choose the two ways of life. “I have set before thee life and death, therefore choose life that thou mayest live.”

When you close your eyes and turn to the silence of the divine darkness, you will have a sense of spaciousness without boundary, the timelessness of the joyous instant and the light of a new day.

Meditation is the clarifier of a beclouded mind.

The Tibetan Doctrine

Letter 71

The thing expected of you, through your final realization of all that has been told you, is to use your imagination so that you will not allow any separation from the Spirit by withdrawing, as it were, into forgetfulness. And if I must be literal, that does not mean that you are to *think* of nothing else; it is an attitude of mind, or as someone has said, “an *altitude* of mind”. Bring everything up to the high quality of the Spirit; do not take thoughts and problems down into the gloom of materialism nor of the negative and despairing solutions. You have your communions; you receive the revelation that comes from them; you begin to sense the Presence; and then you are swept into forgetfulness. It is as if an angel came down and put on a garment, and the garment became illumined, went forth, took life and breathed; and then when the angel left, the garment collapsed into a shapeless thing. So it is in this way of life. But if you say, “I have no life except with the Spirit within me”, you wear the garment through the sordid traffic of the world. And if it is unseen, that does not matter to you.

Forgetting this Life within is one of the problems we all face, and by certain self-disciplines we are helped to the greater awareness of the divine companionship.

We all know how the senses are dulled by great indulgence in the appetites that each one has, but what you do not quite understand yet is that refinement of perception comes from having dominion over them; you can release power within yourselves by sometimes overcoming a physical desire, by transmuting a mental greed of prejudice and criticism (the intense enjoyment of them) into a rushing awareness of wisdom, peace and justice through the realization of the Presence of God. This is obedience; an obedience that is left with you to decide upon. There is a tonic value in your mastery which should give you an exhilaration, as a fine sport puts your body under your control and gives you the satisfaction of co-ordination.

Give over the indulgence of vain imaginings, melancholy, defeatism, a daily sense of martyrdom because of a situation in which you find yourselves. Make a spiritual constitution and live up to it, for it takes greater effort to release ourselves from these negative human emotions, which we say we hate, than to stand purified, cleansed and freed from these great delayers. You delay yourselves.

This is not spoken in censure; it is really an appeal to your intelligence. It is dangerous to slip back into the false easement of emotional despondency, apprehension and fear. As you cleanse the body from fatty degeneracy, you will realize that the fatty consciousness must go also. That is part of your spiritual constitution. And you can cleanse the body and cleanse the mind by the bright discipline of entertaining light.

Be careful not to think of this as effort. Obey the law; make up your mind. *Make up your mind...* ask and it shall be done unto you.

These are but suggestions; ponder on them for the love of Christ within; he is here in your flesh; he sustains, comforts and protects you. He abides with you, is merry with you; he is your friend. He is in dull people and in light people. He is beauty; he is your breath, and your encourager. So when you walk, wherever you go, say, "Thou art here. I am not alone!"

As soon as a man turneth himself in spirit, and with his whole heart and mind entereth into the mind of God which is above time, all that ever he hath lost is restored in a moment. And if a man were to do thus a thousand times a day, each time a fresh and real union would take place; and in this sweet and divine work standeth the truest and fullest union that may be in this present time. For he who hath attained thereto, asketh nothing further, for he hath found the Kingdom of Heaven and Eternal Life on earth.

Theologia Germanica, 1497

Letter 72

Everyone has a choice when he comes to the crossroads where two ways lie; one concerns itself too much with the world; the other will hold your world together through the companionship of the Spirit. To be too much of this world is to waste time with possibilities and terrors. Also dwelling upon the angers and the hates leads to sorrow and sad events. The other road, the seeking of the Spirit in the kingdom within, will help to save the world and bring it to safe haven. This is your duty; this is your sacrifice, for your obedience is part of the leaven that will lift your country to great heights. But this is a discipline that you must take on personally, each for himself, for on either road you cannot escape discipline; *you will either be disciplined by events or you will make your own discipline.* Therefore make your own discipline and so contribute to great events. Be emotionally strong and firm, spiritually strong as steel, but controlled so that you can bend to shocks and not be uprooted by panics.

All that matters is your response to challenging events. If you are left alone to the inflowing and outflowing of human emotional relationship and the onslaughts of their passing moods, you will find that your responses are immediate; you are undefended and emotionally exposed, quick to take fire. The value of these communions and of your silences is that in them, you are strengthened and given poise; you are lifted high above the flood and you are given something strong, serene and healing. This is what is meant by the great words, "of myself I can do nothing"; you discipline yourselves so that you may receive, and you turn to complete acceptance of the outpouring gift of the Spirit.

Do not spill your soul in response to negative alarms and emotion. Be satisfied that you have the key, the name of the Spirit. Go in peace and abide with Him.

*Except the Lord keep the city,
The watchman waketh but in vain. It is but lost
labour that ye hate to rise up early, and so
late take rest.
And eat the bread of carefulness:
For so he giveth his beloved sleep.*

Psalm 127 (Version of Coverdale)

Letter 73

In this dissolving world when events are so quickly followed by events, in confusion, with personalities emerging out of the crucible, great and lasting changes are taking place, and you are naturally assailed through your sensitiveness by the insistent alarms and cold fears that people are subject to. It is a moment when I would like to review your adventure on this journey toward light. Few seem to grasp the true meaning of religion; to many it is a hope through formalized prayers and dogmas to achieve a state of comfort and protection. But this is seldom realized, because they leave religion to the teachers. In your adventure toward freedom, you have taken an active part in your own development; you have sought sincerely and honestly a working method by which you could live as a channel for the Holy Spirit to flow through for your healing and cleansing and as a way to bring it into the world. You have become aware of receiving comfort and the protection that faith gives, and you know that the core of you is an inward calm, that it is steady and not subject to change. In a sense, you have built an ark, so that in this flood of emotion, of terror and uncertainty, you are safe. And by that I mean, when tempted to dismay and bewilderment by the steady onslaught of news, you can open the invisible door and melt into the steadfast, quiet and confident center of your being.

The old disciplines of the monastic orders were devised to remind the stubborn flesh that it must not come first; the angelus, matins and vespers and the wayside crosses help many to remember the Spirit within. Today, instead of the hair shirt, the cruelty upon the body of the race drives us to the need of awareness of Him to ease our hearts and sustain us, and hard as it is to believe, when you, each in turn, come to your God alone, within, by so much is this holocaust diminished; there is no greater way to practice the love of God, the brotherhood of man, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Within this center of infinite quiet and peace lies resolution to action that is born of love and wisdom. Whenever challenged by the horrors or irritations of human living, you know

that through the mind, you can touch all that is august, deathless beauty and immortality.

What do we desire above all, above all? Perfect peace of mind, integrity, order, the victory of goodness, honor, joy and eternal love, free from human sentimentality and emotionalism; the high, clean impersonal rightness. Well, all these are for your asking... not praying, for your accepting and realizing and wanting.

Go your way step by step. Now is the appointed time to do your part; and your part, as you know well, cannot be done with righteous and breathless rectitude, but by being receptive, so that you can be used as a channel, which is part of being a temple of the Spirit. It is the antithesis of noise and dubious fame; be the silent ones, anointed, with rod and staff and the scallop shell of quiet and the promise of truth.

I have resolved... to run when I can, to go when I cannot run, and to creep where I cannot go. As to the main, I thank Him who loves me, I am fixed; my way is before me, my mind is beyond the River that has no bridge.

John Bunyan, 1628-1688

Letter 74

As we have told you so often before, it is vitally important that you do not let the violence of the world rule your minds, so that you live entirely on the circumference of the circle of your lives. Many people would be impatient if you should tell them that creative action, action based upon spiritual premises, is born in complete stillness, the stillness the inventor and scientist know in the laboratory. Not necessarily the stillness which is merely noiselessness alone, but the intense quiet of drawing upon the source of inspiration. "Be quiet and let me think!" is the cry of the man hard-pressed in the material world; and, though he often does not know it, he is demanding something within himself to show him the way out. For you, the way out can be found more easily, more surely. "Let me be quiet that I may know... Thee."

Man ordinarily goes no further than his own experience (and that includes the experience of the race) for help in an emergency. But those who go still further within themselves for the answer will find a timeless wisdom and inspiration to be translated into the human need of the moment. "Call upon me in time of need and I will answer thee!" is not just a comforting thought to be forgotten when you have to act quickly and wisely in a material world. It is the most practical thing you can do.

In this time of conflict, do not yield too much to the temptation of living in the violence; fast and pray, fast in your minds from doubt and fear. And when you pray, do not pray too much as suppliants; do not beseech for the great and holy Gift already within you. Learn to receive, to accept and to use.

“O Christ, omniscient within me, give me knowledge, knowledge of thyself in relation to my living day by day. Give me thy Spirit of eternal life to live now, on the earth, in the elements, in the world. Feed my mind with thy living bread; quench my thirst for thee with living water from the well of Life!”

Letter 75

Though you are moved by the might of oceans, the infinity of sand, the high ceiling of heaven and outward vastness awes you by its diminishing influence, though you see mountain ranges and forests, the night blue of the sky with stars and planets and worlds beyond, though you hear of remote frozen seas and desolate wastes – do not belittle yourself, for this spiritual concept within you is deathless and all-powerful, measureless. Therefore, when you look through your eyes at immensities, know that that which you hold within is more powerful. Hold to this knowledge and fill yourself with faith, for it is your shield. Though you see multitudes in conflict emotionally and racially, be sure you are not impressed with your own littleness and inadequacy; that is the stupidity which cometh through ignorance. The ignorant are awed by show; the wise are awed by what is not seen, by thought. Hold the concept which encompasses more universes than you are yet aware of and through the complete humility of the self and your service of faith, you will become as yeast in the sodden world of materialism. Though your personal lives seem constricted and humble, it does not matter.

Do I have to warn you at this point? I will quote a brother who lived centuries ago. “... for meekness is imperfect and perfect; first a true knowing of the frailty of man, a feeling of a man’s self as he is. The other the awareness of the overabundant love of God in himself, in beholding of which all nature quaketh, all wise men be fools, and saints and angels be blind.” This infinite power is only revealed by the denial of self in the true sense and the glorifying of the Light within. Wherever you are, you can touch this secret spark which is like radium in that it gives off an eternal and deathless energy. The time will come when you will have little to do with it because it will become more and more involuntary through your desire and need and love; it will gradually consume the outer you; it will cleanse you of your appetites for they will be uncomfortable in the Presence of this radiance, and the false and ignorant will be healed away.

Use this indwelling Spirit! How many pray to it and then go about their affairs under tension, taking upon themselves the burden from which they have asked to be freed, not trusting the God to whom they have prayed! In the *realizing oneness* with the Spirit do you find your working godhood; the beauty

descending and ascending is your freedom. God moves in you now, through limitless space. Cast off your mooring from the land of fear and doubt, leave the prisons of despair and melancholy, and set sail on a guided journey where the stars are in their appointed places and the voyage is true and beautiful and safe.

Be active in silence
Strong in peace
Keep thy strength in gentleness
Rest with the song of wings about thee
Fill the inner reaches with love
Bathe in Spirit
For It is sweetness to thy bones flesh and health.
Keep in this holy estate and listening – *obey!*

Letter 76

The chemistry of your body, affected as it is by emotional states, is very delicate, very sensitive; it is true in the strongest men. You are subject to thousands of influences; of some you are completely unaware; and if you could see to what some people react, you would be astonished. Climate, fears most childlike, changes in temperature, old resentments, fear of cats, rainy days, depressing influences from strangers, noises and even smells are constantly affecting your bodily health; not to mention maladjustments. The greatest thing to help you is the habit of being in the Presence of God. Your wish is for it, but as someone has said, *the proof of desire is found in the habit of response*. When this great habit becomes more secure, you will find an orderly faith is a controlling, rejuvenating rightness, and your weak, defenseless, awkward, too solid body will at last know what it means to find fulfillment in the highest health. Oh, fill yourself with light! Try every kind of way not to slide off the beautiful smooth path where, if you could but stay, are no aches or unease or sadness or pain or tiredness. Yes, you will find a health more wonderful than any athlete's, for it will be a vibrating faith. But you must do it. Be alert, industrious in the habit of being in His Presence. The fight is inch by inch, never swerving. Learn that by these thorny struggles to keep what you get and be strong in the holding of it, you will be saved from having to go back to learn your lesson all over again. All that is asked of you is to be gloriously happy, and it seems such a painful process! Watch every idle word, for you will find joy in this wonderful game.

It is true, the successes seem frail and delicate, but they are stronger than you can have any conception of, for because of your intent you are being filled with healing, vitalizing, sustaining truth and eternal love; it is all on so grand a scale. You will astonish yourself, and if you can see the simplicity of this – the victory is yours.

Delay, delay – stop it now! Watch your every response and thought and bring to yourself a day, a fraction of a day, when you have kept His Presence in your heart and your heart in His Presence; for this is the good news of which the prophets spoke; this is what it is all about. This is what they meant when they said “Rejoice!” for there is very little from which we cannot be defended, and there is much that we can overcome magnificently by learning not to sink down into darkness as the result of not being awake and alert.

Here he is – now. But man hates to think. He hates the effort of thinking; he is always seeking escape in the senses, in anything to get away from that which will make him free. Take the dare – for this is no foolish thing. Snatch moments, invent reminders, until this divine habit becomes constant. It is really as if you were in a place which is overcrowded, like a tenement street, and dark, and you knew a secret door that opened into a garden where there was quiet and everything had a friendly feeling; even the flowers and leaves turned toward you and the sky was aglow with infinite refreshment, that feeling of complete renewal of your tired mind, your weary flesh, and your clogged Spirit. Walk as you would enjoying a rose garden; hear the fountains of goodness and the birds of joy singing.

There; that is a clumsy idea of what you will find when you slip through that door into His Presence, but the mind of man is so constituted that he has to be told and retold and reminded that there *is* a door all the time, every hour of the twenty-four.

I am the way, the truth and the life.
Come unto me all ye who are heavy laden.
Seek and ye shall find.
My peace I give unto you.

Finally, be not afflicted nor discouraged to see thyself faint hearted; He returns to quiet thee, that still He may stir thee; because this divine Lord will be alone with thee... that thou mayest look for silence in tumult, solitude in company, light in darkness, forgetfulness in pressures, vigour in despondency, courage in fear, resistance in temptation, peace in war, and quiet in tribulation.

Miguel de Molinos, 1640-1697

Letter 77

The frail life which is yours sets forth upon its journey weak and helpless, passing through storms and changes, strange unlockings unknown to your consciousness. Things hardly realized, influences beyond your conception make cross currents upon your destiny, upon this frail life which like a leaf blown high into the sky crosses mountains and valleys. In your day and times, this life seems meaningless, terrifying and full of suffering, violent and easily brushed across the veil because of a thousand menacing dangers. The purpose of the inward struggles for integrity, to live, even to simply exist, stupefies the philosophers who like all the rest grope blindfolded through the first human stages, for the mystery is not revealed at once, but day by day, little by little, and only to the seeker. I hear you say, "If I am in communion with the celestial influences, the Holy Spirit, why is my path not made smooth, and why does it not bring about the instant destiny of my endeavor? Why is there this impenetrable wall between me and my aspiration and its fulfillment?"

Think. To fulfill any enterprise means that you meet other destinies also behind impenetrable walls, filled with emotions, desires, attributes different from your own. No wonder, therefore, that your little leaf is swirled high into the storms and revolts of other human destinies. This way is dark, the road hard and flinty, and no one can free himself from the question: "Why? Why?" The events of your times, stages in human personalities of those with whom you must march, add to your darkness and confusion. Under these circumstances of human living, great can be the loneliness and suffering. Life is awful indeed in its greater sense. But the hope and the wonder is that a change comes, a dawning, when you reach a place, when you step forward and choose wisely. You have acted upon your choice; you have stood your ground and have not weakened, so that we can tell you to walk confidently carrying your dawning with you. Within you is the dawn; within you is the light; within you is the freedom; therefore with eye turned inward, you are safe. Perhaps I speak to you behind many horizons, but I can tell you that great is your hold upon the impenetrable secret which you have seized like children, not fully understanding, but with an instinct for this bright jewel which is all you really have. This dawn that you carry, clearing, clarifying, refreshing, is all that is needed for you. Live in it, abide in it, then let the leaves of your life blow free and high, and you will find a true direction, a true control, ordered and inspired. "No harm shall come nigh thee" indeed, while you walk this Way, and the far-reaching of the Light you trust in is boundless and unknown to you as you sit here in this hour, in this century, in this universe.

Why you must not trouble yourselves with whys and wherefores is because it is a waste of time. You will be taught and learn as you go and as your need arises; and believe me, the fantastic heights of human knowledge are as nothing compared to the childlike instinct you have to go through all knowledge, all concepts to seize Light itself at its zenith. This is the known quantity. Seize and hold eternally to the highest, and your feet will be guided through eternity, for it is your childlike faith that keeps your universe together.

When the question comes, asking how it is possible that this little life as long as breath or a sigh can be given power from the source of Life, reach up and hold the star; then things are revealed to you. But they are revealed in voiceless feelings, in new strength, new vitalities, new freedoms, new shining glorious sinews until you are all light – *then* trust in It for when you are completely unafraid and clean in your faith, your life will be divinely inspired, and you can step forth with a sure tread.

Letter 78

Over a long period of time, you have been warned, prepared and fortified to meet violence and disorder; it is, therefore, like good soldiers of the Prince of Peace that you find yourselves on duty. Do not let a thought touched by cynicism penetrate your armor; do not wonder that a Prince of Peace should need an army, for “an armed man keepeth the goods in peace” and the servants of Christ are defending the citadels of the Spirit which giveth Life and not death. The sword of the Spirit frees all men, because its discipline is upon the man who bears it.

And now a high resolve is essential. Prepare yourselves for inward strength, a refuge within undisturbed, a realm august, the kingdom of heaven within your own consciousness, and let no destructive human emotion draw you from it.

Every individual has, within himself, a great part to play, and let no one think he is too small, too insignificant. For the power of the kingdom of heaven, when man makes way for it to pour through him as a channel in the stillness of disciplined and controlled emotion, cannot be measured, and there is nothing too great, nothing too small.

I cannot stress too much the responsibility of each one of you. Put God immediately before you and stand behind Him, close, and you will be strengthened, comforted and instructed. Play this part all the day through; hold Him up as a shield against the enemies within yourself and celebrate His birth each day within your own heart. In this way, you serve your country and all men. Rest in the shelter of silence where you can hear His word, and obey.

At the time of the festival of the Prince of Peace, we are called upon in our daily human life to face violence. Our first defense is to turn to him with such rejoicing as we have never known before, for to rejoice is to worship, to acknowledge him our Saviour in a time of crisis. Hang the green garlands; light the tall candles; sing praise in an outpouring of thankfulness that he has shown us the way, the truth and the life of His glory. As was written centuries ago, “Come, come with me, O folk. Hasten to see Eternal Life in swaddling clothes!”

For this, "rejoice, I say unto you rejoice!"

Christmas, 1942

Letter 79

In every walk of life, man faces the curious hurly-burly of daily living which brings with it the wavering faith in the invisible realities, honor, integrity, principle. He often discards them as burdens in what seems to him a meaningless and futile world. It is the same with nations as with individuals when expediency replaces wisdom and the long view. In human occasions, one's idea for oneself seems very pitiful; it is up and then down again, retrogression, self-betrayal and then hope and self-discipline, attack, retreat, sloughs, backwaters, opposing tides and gigantic fears, cruel realities.

No creative man in any endeavor escapes this sense of confusion and striving on the plane of material effort, whether he is a professional man, a businessman or an artist. But when he turns inward and leaves all this restfully to the serenity of deathless order, he finds release, and that inner wisdom will rebuild his world out of chaos. There is no other way to this accomplishment. You cannot see the working, for it is as delicate as a butterfly's journey through a hurricane. It will light upon the most unexpected havens. It is true that the valley of the shadow is frightening, and it is sometimes difficult to find Him who says, "I am with you, I am thy rod and staff", but accept no negative whatever, particularly in the darkest moment, for you have been told that you are temples of the Holy Spirit which abideth in you and never leaves you nor forsakes you. That trust in the dark brings light, not resignation which is often a negative, for man needs to believe that "when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him". But *believe it!* In times of anxiety, turn like a child to the simple instructions, knowing that "the Father within doeth the work" and that you can do nothing but rest in that assurance. Be high-careless, strong in faith, a spendthrift in love; keep a valiant heart; put on your crown and be a knight indeed!

Love conquereth all things.

Letter 80

At this important time, let each one of you begin his day by listening. You will be told in answer to your need, and yet the voice is so impersonal in what it says you often brush it aside. Stay the hand, bend the ear and listen, for there is your success. Listen for your fresh inspiration, for even these communions can take on the same comforting, sedative quality.

Each man at some time goes into the awful vault of himself; there alone he is silenced. It is here *you are before you became*; it is here you remain in the advance of inevitable progression. You may wonder how this thing you cannot see is yourself, and you begin to be aware of how much of you is asleep. Also your whole record is here.

Not long ago, we spoke of how "in the beginning was the Word". Can you see now that this inner place within you which has no boundary is also yourself? With the Word put into action, you are Man made manifest. When at first you turn your attention to your own *withinness*, gradually through the dimness Light cometh in and you are, as it were, in a sea of twilight, and you begin to know there is something that can be understood. Perhaps you are aware at this period of fear and the violence and pain around you; then dawns the Light more steadily and you have reached a place where you can choose instead of remaining asleep, alone in the dark.

When you choose the Word and place it in the center of what may seem to you a vault of darkness, you make the beginning that will set you free. This is a parable; understand it, for when you fall into neglect, back cometh the twilight which grows darker until you are again in darkness.

No wonder it is a re-enacting of birth out of darkness into life, into resurrection.

This is a solemn instruction. You in this center alone can never stay in one place; you either sink down or are uplifted, for when you neglect the Word in days of freedom, you will find your sky darkening... Keep in the Word for your life's sake, for your love's sake.

This is a time for dedication, a time for baptism, for sanctification. No matter what happens, remember not to allow the twilighting of your sky; keep illumined in the Word and let your battle cry be, "I am the Light of the world!"

... The great Prince of Peace and spirits, as He cometh forth, casts a cloud about Him; so He comes on upon us; so He encompasseth us... Yet still we speak of Him as far above and beyond the starry sky, and of His coming as at a great distance. But, behold! He is already in the midst of us; He breaks forth on our right hand, and on our left, like a flame, round about us, and we perceive Him not.

Peter Sterry [Cromwell's Chaplain], d. 1671

Letter 81

In these days of violence, it is important to bear a standard upon the side of righteousness in your daily lives and to remember that fear is the tempter, that it is faith in your antagonist, as I have told you before. It is the destroyer and always brings sorrow.

One can have nothing but compassion for those who dwell in fear, but we would lead them away into the only place of trust and protection. As he said, "This kind goeth out only by fasting and prayer". Therefore pray; keep your body a holy temple, for only then can the flaming powers pour through.

Use your imagination to realize that the hidden strengths within you are awakened sometimes through great experiences, shocks, changes. Man is aroused to manhood or broken very often by lack of courage, spiritual courage which could have been his for the asking. There are those all over the world today who are giving testimony of having received what they asked for simply, with childlike faith. It is simplicity that is hard for us. But you have found a way through the darkness as they, in terrible need, have done; you too, in your everyday lives, can take a lamp and walk quietly step by step down a path into lighted confidence. Keep it lighted; never let it go out. Those others who are hard pressed by grim circumstances do not have to be reminded to watch their light; it is their life, the Almighty, the comforter.

... The human reality has a terrifying grip, and faith seems very nebulous when danger's breath is hot on your face, but your safety is in letting go to faith and in knowing that faith is where your mind is. Give yourself up to it, let go, for underneath are everlasting arms. It is true that you cannot speak of faith as if it were an abstract or medicinal sort of thing; no, it's the actual touching of Christ himself.

Goodness is not goodness unless it is a rapture.

Robert Norwood, 1874-1932

Letter 82

You know your instructions, for whatever we tell you is forever the same simple manual. It may be told to you in many ways, yet it all resolves down to the eternal role or principle, if you will have it so. Everyone has a divine spark, and it is realized for the most part, forgotten often. All we bring to you is the prayer, the sympathetic suggestion that you keep it alight. Blow on it until it becomes a reality, for it will consume and burn away dross. Many have to go through suffering to be awakened, but that is the human way, not the divine way which is one of illumination, when we seek and ask as if it were more important than anything else in life. Every experience changes us one way or another. When the spark is neglected, it naturally grows duller, and then untoward circumstances, personalities, difficulties, obstructions, steal us away into forgetfulness, and we put the emphasis of our vitality, thought and enthusiasm upon outward events which seem so important at the moment. Where are the events of yesterday that engaged our time and minds out of all proportion to their importance? Your first task is to blow upon your divine spark, and each one is alone with himself in this regard. It isn't enough that we come together and receive renewed strength, surcease and inspiration; the battle is alone with yourself in a material world.

You have the instructions; you have the chart; the course is laid. It is for you now at this great time to dedicate your inward life to the manifestation of that which is invisible, this secret personal industry. You will come away with refreshment, encouragement and help from your common communion, but the actual work is yours alone. A man turns to his beloveds for comfort, healing and renewed strength, the strong family ties. But he faces life and its struggle alone, and if he is illumined from within and cleaves with all his might to his inward inspiration, his reward is a sense of eternal brotherhood with the invisible and the companionship of Him who never leaves nor forsakes. And for every victory and step forward into this regeneration of your human selves, so much are we and all the world inspired in ways you may not yet understand. No one can take a step ahead of you or lay down your lives for you, but for every noble impulse, for every action obedient to your voice within, you are given strength.

You seem to forget at times to use your greatest gift in ordinary human conflicts and problems and are forever leaving out the essential approach, which is very understandable in a life of worldliness. But your opportunity is great now, for the worldly are bewildered and shaken. Bring this light within you into your eyes and hands and feet, into your comings and goings, into every small effort, for the more you use it, the more wonderful will be your reward.

And so I tell you that you have the knowledge, and the chart and the implements for your journey upward, onward through this frightened world. Blow upon your spark within; keep still in multitudes; hold your mind there and keep it from racing, and do not beat against life with frantic effort; the quiet effort is toward awareness, keeping cool and unruffled, in perfect faith, in celestial stillness in your daily lives.

*By all means use sometimes to be alone,
Salute thyself: see what thy soul doth wear.
Dare to look in thy chest: for 'tis thy own:
And tumble up and down what thou find'st there.
Who cannot rest till he good fellows find,
He breaks up house, turns out of doors his
mind.*

George Herbert, 1593-1632

Letter 83

We have said before that in these times, you must be sure not to establish too deep an interest in events, so that you are a barometer to news. It is, of course, a part of the life you live, but do not be drenched in the shocks which come suddenly in these days of violence, for one must stay held in His hand without being lured or tempted away by despair. Stay in your high tower of quiet while in action.

The admonition can be misunderstood; all about you are those who will say, "Surely this is a form of egotism, of exaggerated self-importance, an escape. You are trying to pull down the blinds and shut out realities which we all ought to face; it is smug and does not have sympathy for your fellow men. You shut a door upon what you ought to know."

Nothing is further from the truth. This way of life is not egotistical, because it is only successful when we put ourselves aside completely by saying, "Of myself I can do nothing." There is no exaggeration of the self because that spells instant failure of accomplishment. It is not an escape, because it is the way of service, the constant acknowledgment of responsibility to your fellow man through realization of your obligation to Him. You do not pull down the blinds when you turn your face to God, that you may abide in his Presence and bring his peace nearer than the despair of the world. You are not making yourselves smug and self-righteous when you "make your being as wide as eternity" that you may be a channel for Him to pour through His healing love to the world; and no one faces reality with more profound awareness than the person who looks upon it with the eyes of compassion that see through the wrong to the invincible Right brooding near, waiting to be used, to pour out itself in abundant joy.

You have been taught to "seek *first* the kingdom", and it is sometimes hard, because of our inherited belief that duty must be a trial, to believe that joy comes first; goodness, truth and beauty come first. Selflessness is a more-of-God-ness. "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live!"... and it is that singing note that we hear from within that fortress across the seas today. Facing terror, they sing; and it is through such singing God works.

Have no fear; turn within to that eternal stillness where abides spiritual strength. It is then your cup runneth over and spills itself throughout the universe; it is a bounty poured to mankind. Nothing is too big nor too little, for you do not yet know enough of values, nor your latent power. But you *do* know from human experience the power of the despair spirit, the discouraged spirit, the ironic spirit. Therefore of how much greater power is your mustard seed of faith. Refuse all else; be undismayed, at peace in the center of immortality within yourself, for this is helping to bring order out of chaos. Don't think too much how it is to be done, and do not be afraid to be like children under the wings of the Almighty.

Let no darkening thought put out one lamp, and this year of all years, worship the Babe in the manger with thanksgiving and joy, for he is the Light of the world. The holy mystery is that his Spirit dwells within us, and his word is, "Let your light shine!"

Christmas, 1943

Sometimes the body sits on a stump and has to be told by the happy Spirit, March on, brave one!

Anonymous

Man impelled by his natural foresight inclines toward his own perfection.

Dante Alighieri, 1265-1321

Fulfil thyself in perfection through Me.

Anonymous

Jones Very said he felt it an honor to wash his face, being, as it was, the temple of the Spirit.

Emerson's Journal

Letter 84

Do you not begin to see with the inward eye, realizing at last the reality of the spiritual intent? The thought beneath the threshold is uncovered a little, and you are able to perceive with a clearer vision the meaninglessness of your human desires – inertias, angers, prides and all the heavier attributes of character. As you stand here, truth will shine in dark places, and you will find that a new faculty will appear, as it were, within you, and you will hear because of the refinement of your nature through this fasting, the clear and delicate whisper which once heard and obeyed will give you the kingdom. Through the overcoming of appetites, you are a new awakened entity (it is indeed a rebirth) able at last to hear the voice which has spoken to you so often but was faint because of the obstruction of the impulses and desires of the outer you. The secret is that by becoming one with the invisible through spiritual knowledge, through continence in all things, you free yourselves from heavy burdens which are soul-destroying, and you can go through the fire without being burned. Be holy, be holy, be exquisite instruments – in all humility, be kings!

You have heard and obeyed. Many get comfort in the hearing and do not obey. There is a strange place in the thick realm between the hearing of the Word and the assimilation of it – the acting upon it. You go into cul-de-sacs, sleeps of forgetfulness; often we want to shake you out of your sleep into realization. Many appetites act like opium and blur the crystal-clear vision that is needful. Obey the words of the Spirit; watch the outer you; keep him from interfering; and that is a task you cannot go to sleep in.

It is an extraordinary goal you would achieve and requires vigilance. The causes of buffetings are not revealed to man except in glimpses as he pushes on in high faith, in action, for you have to *live your way out*. Remember that your past efforts are with you to help you in your daily crisis, and often when the way about you is dark, look down and you will find your feet are on shining ground, the golden road is solid under your feet. The artist simile is very apt, ponder on it if you wish to be spiritual beings of a high order; to become so in a very real and tragic world – tragic in the sense that it is a world human, selfish and ignorant – the artist faces all these things; he knows his goal and is not satisfied with second-rate efforts, for there is nothing second class in true art. There is a fine strength in holding yourselves to the work in hand, for nothing worthwhile achieved in the realm of Spirit or of art has been done softly in the thickness of the outer coatings.

We are trying to tell you that the escape from pain and violence is to release the inner you from the prison of the outer you, for when you let this divine Spirit free so that it is in every action of your living day, you will be healed, comforted, assured with a sense of safety in the lofty realm of truth and beauty, order and proportion – free in a high impersonal selfless life. Free, as Paul said, from the law of sin and death; and by escaping the law is meant the tendencies of your character when it sinks into its human self. You always loved the truth, and

it is strong stuff. But we are trying to say that the beautiful, childlike thing to do is exquisitely joyful – hold yourself in a listening attitude and be artists in Christ.

Miracles are not contrary to nature but only contrary to what we know about nature.

St. Augustine, A.D. 353

Letter 85

In this time of great storms of feeling, movements of psychic forces, hatreds, passions, merciless terror, the agony of self-preservation and misunderstanding... here you stand. It is the moment for you to realize that when you open to receive the Spirit of the mind of Christ, you let into his maelstrom of feeling a north wind to cool the heat and clear the skies, and to know that you can be a means of bringing sanity and lifting hope. Oh see the vision! This is helping to overcome the world.

In the galaxy of thoughts that makes your mind, you have the imagination of the seeing eye, the eye that perceives the invisible; keep a childlike hopeful knowledge of the unseen goodness and a surety that the divine principle can be reached; remember that though you may be very small outwardly, you can be as the universe; your mind is limitless. Realize your cosmic powers and take time to be a channel for the infinite Spirit to pour through in this great war against darkness, inertia and savagery. As you walk your way and go about your little daily lives, *be measureless*, be timeless, be eternal. Thus will you begin at this time, at this place to fulfill the prophecy “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”.

... My children, cultivate the habit of remembering that in the spiritual world there is no time; in doing this, the relative value will be better understood. It is a great help to take the long view, thus throwing faith far ahead of you upon your path, making the road safe. The next step is practical also – take no thought of anxiety; sufficient unto the day is both the goodness and the evil thereof. And this means that each day is in miniature your whole life. Take it as a complete period to be lifted high, and you will have the sense of something already achieved, something built around you for your protection. See how you can shape the whole day – and then the summation of the long view is shaped also. The psychologist may tell you this is habit forming; he is wrong. It is on an entirely different plane. If you take each day and lift it to the highest you can reach, knowing that each day's problem will be solved spiritually, you will be given almost direct action... changing water into wine!

The power given you when you wake in the morning with this thought will be tremendous in this time of crisis. When you first wake, you are born, and you live a life as the day proceeds until you sleep again. The overtone, your high thought and intent, is your direction for the twenty-four hours. Say, "I am here, Lord, and I will follow Thee and Thy guidance and listen with an inward ear." And again say to yourself, "I shall try and understand that I am reborn this day. Though I have been here, I have never been here before. I will forget yesterday and I shall not dwell upon tomorrow. I will live my span in this miniature sample of a lifetime." In doing this, you will have revealed to you yourself. And what is revealed is – how much do you literally believe and obey the inner voice?

Try to make manifest the living Presence once in twelve hours. Resolve every time you are reborn to make God a reality at least once. And the way is not by hurling yourself at the idea from a sense of duty, but by dissolving into the limitless space within you where there are no restrictions, where there is no poverty, no pain, but where there is peace, the infinite love and salvation... *a safe return*, as that word truly means.

... God doth not ride me as a horse, and guide me I know not whither myself; but converseth with me as a Friend; and speaks to me in such a dialect as I understand fully, and can make others understand.

Henry More, 1614-1687

Letter 86

You often wonder why it has taken so long for certain events to be realized in your lives; that is your question. This is the answer: how long has it taken you to obey the simple requests given you? Has much been asked? Has anything been demanded beyond your strength and intelligence? Let us be spiritually honest; you ask, you pray for results; do you spiritually work for them? Honestly, have you?

I do not like the word "work" – it is too hard a word. But above all, above all, this is not a happy anodyne, an escape from the realities of life through which you can be pleasantly rested and released from momentary strains; this is not an opiate. You have never been failed when you have wholeheartedly opened to receive the Spirit that abides within you; opened to receive it into your mind, into your heart by transmuting all untoward emotions through it. We see this lack of active co-operation so often when great wisdom has been manifested to those who asked for it, and even while receiving it, it slipped away and was forgotten and the advice not taken. The thing enjoyed was the moment of spiritual awareness and the wonderment that the glory for an instant was felt.

How often it is said, "How true and beautiful are these communions!", and then they are not acted upon very much, if at all. This is not a chiding; it is an answer to your question. "Why, oh why am I in this or that situation?" You are a human organism, and a spiritual intelligence is difficult to assimilate and realize. You see the failures more clearly in your acquaintances when they fail to act upon their inner wisdom.

All that is asked is an awareness of God's awareness of you, of the immense love of His Spirit for you. There is no *must* nor effort in this, for once the heart is touched by an awareness of Him, it is comforted, reassured, content.

No effort brings this confident companionship; it is a gift given to him who takes time to rest in the desire for Him, and will free himself from delaying appetites, not always physical appetite. There are greeds that stand in your way; not just the outer greed, but the quality of the spirit of greed within; *there* is where the refinement must take place; melt away this murky darkness which so intimately surrounds the lighter Spirit.

The spiritual significance of baptism, the ancient ritual of crowning a king, hold true; the linen shirt before the gold tunic and the crown. Realize your dedication and you will be free; you cannot hold great power without hurting yourselves if you are full of great shadows and fears. Be holy! Inward discipline is close to the quick of life eternal, and we tell you that the high purity of the light you seek must be made way for. Ah, I have it... clean the lamp chimney, so the light can shine through! It is not difficult when done with joy and good sense. Ask of yourselves the subtle refinement; to hate a man, to self-justify, to overeat, to walk through the day in a subjective sleep, to roll an appetite upon the tongue... Go to the root, what do you want most?

Do not be the ones to receive great inspirations and not act upon them; rededicate your lives and by love, and not effort; clean your lamps.

Narrow is the mansion of my soul; enlarge Thou it, that Thou mayest enter in.

St. Augustine, A.D. 353

Letter 87

It may be helpful for you to consider the fact that to permit stupid thoughts to dwell and slip through the mind is as dangerous as to let sharp delicate tools slip through the fingers. Therefore the old practice of self-examination is recommended if it is made with clean, concentrated thinking that challenges one's words and deeds during the miniature life of a day, thus planning for the future. See and realize the strange unreasonable elements that seem to come from nowhere; shades of savagery born from self-pity, the constant oversweet voice that indulges the self, condoning excuses. There is much degeneration due to emotional storms, even though they are secret storms, that needs the strong tools of creative, intelligent thought to clear away. Yes, build yourselves a practical, efficient, spiritually-hard working instrument that will live your life for you more easily, in balance, so that you will walk sure-footedly through states of emotion. When you are stung by a hurt, an unreasonableness, a delay, watch your response; take it out and look at it. You are to think your way out. Now that you are more aware of your divine assistance, cease from being fools, for the wise man is he who when he prays for wisdom and receives it, acts upon it. Pray that you may realize the tools of thought – recognize them – when they are put shining into your hands. There are no excuses in this realm.

This is not preaching in the old scolding way; this is awakening in your consciousness the inspiration of knowing that you can overcome the world; you cannot overcome the world by formless prayer, although I would not confuse you by implying that you have to put prayer always into words. It is the deep intent, the idea, that carries power; the shape of a cup shapes the substance it contains. That is why the emotion behind a word does not always bring what we expect or desire. It is not enough to say “my kingdom is not of this world”. That is a truth, a noble and divine theme, a statement of intent. What matters is how are you going to prove there is a kingdom within you in which you are a crowned king? Your life is not placed in a palace, but in a very restricted, irritated small area of reality where you meet the heat and cold of public opinion, delays and obstructions, jealousies, malice, lacks, boredom and strain. It is not enough to say “my kingdom is not of this world” and not arrange your thoughts accordingly. An awakening is taking place, a dawning, for the time is approaching when you will realize that you cannot advance spiritually unless you act upon the wisdom given you, instead of receiving, or hearing the voice and then doing nothing about it.

Out of the race have come such realizations because every human who has made this journey has come to this place, this time of understanding, when he sees that acting upon the revelation that has come to him is the only way he can win to victory.

Here is a prayer for thy comfort: "I stand in the light of the Spirit knowing that this tired flesh is not the reality of myself. In this light I stand, aware of immortality now. I will dedicate my waking hours to the realization of this Presence and the knowledge that I am never alone. Thou art with me always and thou art my refreshment."

There is only one Wisdom; it is to understand the thought by which all things are steered through all things.

Heraclitus, 500 B.C.

*My will in thee is faith, not fear; let My will
within thee be done.*

*My will in thee is Wisdom, not foolishness; let
My will within thee be done.*

*My will in thee is Health, not disease; let My will
within thee be done.*

*My will within thee is thy awareness of My love
for thee; let My will within thee be done.*

*Joy, – you understand so little of the joy of Life! You perform as many of
your daily avocations as burdensome tasks instead of labours of love.
Be like little children filled with secret wonder and joy and the spirit of
high adventure.*

M. A. W.

Letter 88

In the youthful moments of triumph when you knew the race was to be won, you found one kind of satisfaction; in the hilarious confidence which came through successful attainment you found another; the serenity which came from a sense of security was still another. Now, when many things are seemingly turned against you, you are faced with the age-old antagonist which is called adversity. It has been met before.

In facing realities out there with your physical and outer consciousness, you are challenged with old humors, fears, dismays, and your world is frozen into immobility. In this adventure, where you have barely crossed the threshold, much preparation which may have seemed slow and useless has taken place. Listen then, listen and receive. Face your enemy with your outer selves; do not think, listen; listen and repeat these words; put them in your mouth and blow them like a clarion, high and sweet and clear to the four corners; "My kingdom is not of this world. I will abide in my kingdom and as the day followeth the night, my kingdom shall be made manifest and my outward life shall straighten and fall into a divine mold."

You do not see the immediate manifestation because you are still children, and as a child's destiny is locked in its breast, so you, by this spiritual communion are unlocking prisons that you are unaware of in material life; blind as you are to the immediate development, you should see clearly the happy radiance of your freedom from the laws of your outer worldiness. Through obedience you can find dominion, so do not waste your time in outward fret; you have not been prepared for that form of activity. Through spiritual loyalty and heavenly enthusiasm, you can be prepared for the kingdom of happiness upon this tortured and suffering earth. Indeed, indeed, He will "give you beauty for ashes".

This is to remind you that he who is God's anointed shall nevermore quail; give me your hand and repeat these words: "Blessed Saviour here I stand and here I reaffirm my vow with all the strength of my body, my soul, my mind; I vow that I will put Thee first, that I will endeavor to bring my thought, my brain, my heart, my very flesh and blood to the instant realization of Thy actual Holy Presence within me. I dedicate myself to the realization of You, my Redeemer, my Comforter, in every action of the day or night. I vow that I will challenge every experience that cometh to meet me; my whole life I dedicate to the realization of Thy Word. I vow to keep my body pure, my mind sweet and ready for Thy intent, knowing that I rest in Thy immortal love."

Letter 89

It was promised that in obedience to the words given, you would be protected and held together, held from your own scatterings. You know well enough that you make your human difficulties yourselves through your unawareness. Now remember this, you will each be safe and protected within the fortress of your own making; therefore we ask you to draw within and stay there. This drawing within and staying involuntarily controlled is a task for those who would be masters of their material and spiritual lives, self-contained in God. You are tired, for you have let your armor slip from you, and you have a sense of futility; that is understandable, for the spiritual way, which is new to the race (compared to the ways of human experience) is difficult for the mind to remember. Here we are, telling the same story as in the beginning! Let us examine ourselves; what is the holy grail we seek? We seek absolute dominion over life; that is the long adventure, the direction and the purpose. We seek the wisdom, the knowledge and the intelligence to face and eliminate from our characters those weaknesses and inertias, fears and lukewarmnesses which bring about that state in affairs wherein we have no dominion, but are enslaved by those who have more intelligence and strength, even though they are still on a lower plane.

Facing the realities, therefore, you will agree that we must play this game of the will-to-win as one plays a game of tennis; with the concentrated one-pointedness of the will to succeed, to surmount all difficulties, to keep emotions calm, serene, to keep from anger which immediately gives the antagonist the advantage. In this game, it is necessary to keep joyous in understanding love, to keep faithful, because that is where your heart is, inspired, transcended, that you may know yourself as a son of God. When you affirm this joyous and indomitable resolution and keep yourself voluntarily within yourself, calm, sure, undismayed, unafraid – then you will not scatter and be at the mercy of the violences and jealousies, the humiliations and dullness of stupid events.

Those who are faithful and aware of the companionship of the Spirit, those who know they do not walk alone through the violence in these times, know also that the steadfastness given them by the Spirit when they are channels for it, helps mightily to strengthen the unity of the whole, even though fear and peril stalk the earth. Rise up and shout within yourselves for this state of dominion, and perform what should be normal results instead of passive fumbling at an idea. What we call normal results by making this principle work, you call a miracle. The time has come for you to march against this tide of darkness and carry your lighted lamps quietly, steadily. Heal yourselves, your bodies, your characters; get out of this slough of indefiniteness and bewilderment; come in where you belong and give this tragic world the infinite qualities of the Spirit when you let it have its way with you as channels for joy, beauty and truth. You are spiritual beings; you are great and noble people when you are your divine selves. Now stand up in the center of your unregenerated selves and be born again. Be miracle workers, pierce the clouds, pierce high heaven and Light will come pouring through; for He is thy friend, He is thy

comforter, He is thy teacher, thy solace, thy strength, thy impersonal, eternal Reality.

Now is the appointed time; rise and be illumined, rise and be awake, knowing that your hands are uplifted. His wisdom is in thy heart, His strength is in thy body, and in this state of grace, ask what ye will and it will be done unto you, pressed down and overflowing. You have sensed this is the truth; now make the truth a reality.

All the great works and wonders that God has ever wrought... or even God Himself with all His goodness, can never make me blessed, but only in so far as they exist and are done and loved, known, tasted, and felt within me.

Theologia Germanica, 1497

They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.

Jonah 2:8

Letter 90

It may help you to remember once in awhile how deeply the human being is enmeshed in the flesh, and, what is not often thought of, the flesh is very old. Although it is constantly renewed in an almost incredibly short time, a few months, the cells bear the stamp of race memories and experiences of the ages past, and that is why this tired flesh, the body of the human race, which has met savagery, war, sorrow and grief, is so friendly to despair.

Now you, in times of peace, were given a standard to carry, and you chose the lonely road; seemingly lonely. It is lonely because of cynicism and disbelief, which is part of the race memory you carry with you as a member of this physical body of the human race, so old, so inert, that it gives off clouds of doubt and fear. For this reason, it is difficult for some to look upon the pure innocence of a new idea without suspicion.

You have received this idea and entertained it at intervals, and between the intervals, the clouds that emanate from old habits of thought obscure the light, and you walk about in a sleep of forgetfulness, until you remember and you come again to fitfully hold in awareness the illuminating Spirit. Yet I tell you that this Light is more powerful than the past and the heavy race record that is written upon it. Although fitfully held it has protected and safeguarded your lives, for this communion that you hold is very powerful, though how this is so is strange to your human conception. The simplest metaphor is that you are a lamp,

for you can become illumined, and the invisible rays of light that shine through your even fitful awareness touch elements of which you have no knowledge. The world picture is baffling and dismaying; but as you dispel the miasmas and mists that arise from ancient bogs of race experience, this inner light will free you from attributes that you have not realized. And this steadfast desire to know God and eternal life by faithful self-discipline is a greater offering to the hope of a new world than you can yet imagine. I tell you that by keeping steadily, rhythmically alive in faith, that beautiful eternal stillness where courage also dwells, you make an immeasurable contribution to mankind; quiet, unseen, unknown except to yourself. This will keep you from vain imaginings which find breeding grounds in the ancient swamps of past consciousness. Because you have this gift of the Spirit, your responsibility is great. You have this inward splendor; now use it!

Be vigilant in calmness; in love be there at your center. It is difficult, for one catches anxiety, irritation and fear, but if the race had done this, it would not be at war. Be ahead of the race, not in its warlike preparations, but in the idea back of it, for you are the army of spiritual soldiers behind the actual ones, therefore your discipline in some ways must be sterner; not stern, perhaps, for love is the word; the edges of your intent must not be blurred. Remember that you are protected by your inner convictions.

“I, a son of God, stand in this human turmoil holding the long trust. I throw my trust, like light far ahead upon my path knowing that goodness and all that is merciful is with me, and by this stand, I do my share to make the world hoped for. In courage and in love of God is the only safety.”

I would fain be to the Eternal Goodness, what his own hand is to a man.

Theologia Germanica, 1497

Letter 91

We have frequently talked to you about the disciplines of life, and I would like to make my meaning a little clearer. First of all, do not be self-conscious about self-discipline, for then it is easy to become self-righteous. The advice is, take action but be silent, for the real purpose is to awaken your faculties to a clean awareness of the reality of the Spirit. Let everything you do be toward that goal... *everything*. But for the sake of your personal lives, do not do it too eagerly; do it silently, easily as breathing, and thoughtfully. Fast from too much talk (as well as food) in things spiritual; you will be told when to speak.

No one can tell you very much about the disciplining of the mind; it must come from a searching, honest examination of one's tendencies of thought and emotion. You know better than anyone can tell you of the accumulation of dreary mental luggage that you carry about with you; old prejudices, criticisms, foolish habits or response to ideas as well as surrounding influences, and mind-drifting; driftings toward nothing at all. But after I say this to you, I realize that there is a danger in it, for if you become self-conscious about pleasant wanderings of the mind through the green pastures of your daily life, which bring a rich sense of appreciation, you may question it. I can illustrate what I mean by giving you a negative picture; if you receive bad news, if your mind is shaken by what you call righteous indignation or if you are suddenly afraid – you know instantly what to do; you turn to the divine Companion who walks with you, for help, wisdom and protection. We often need the drillmaster to keep us from dwelling too long in the subjective no-man's land, but how you do this must come from your own experience within.

What is it you really want? You want to be brilliantly aware, gloriously alive with true health, sustained by omniscient wisdom and protected by steadfast faith. You want a healthy mind and Spirit. Be assured that if you obey the promptings from within, you will come into a new lease of vitality, power and happiness. Do not be discouraged by the stubbornness of the self, the ebbing tides of interest, and the sloughs of despond. Awake; so little is asked, so great is the reward!

Yes, here there is no confusion; here the surface of the water of life is not ruffled; here it is still and deep with the eternal peace. The grandeur of the stillness that you find here will overcome all outward disturbances. Your task is not to throw fat into the fire. You are to be still, tenacious, faithful, that you may be an impersonal channel for the outpouring of wisdom and peace. As one said, "When you meditate, open not only your listening mind, but the other door of your mind as well, so that eternal love streams out as fast as it comes in. Store nothing. Go into the calm and luminous silence to renew, but stay in the soil of your life for your strength. Do not waste time asking for peace; get more fearless peace into your souls; then there will be some good – and peace will follow."

Letter 92

For what can we give praise, for what can be given thanks, for what can we rejoice at this time? Let us not use these words lightly, nor fail to look in the face of suffering and dread as they walk the earth. The question is not, Why do they fill the world today? They have always been here; do not confuse quantity with quality, in suffering or in anything else. Jesus walked amidst violence and savagery, and yet he said, "Ask that your joy may be full!" It is the same age-old question, not *why*, but *how* are we to meet the invasion of our hearts and minds by bitterness of the world?

Down the ages comes the answer, over and over again, in many tongues, from all the steadfast ones: "For when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him", and the standard has to be lifted first in the heart, through our awareness of our oneness with the indwelling Christ, reborn daily within us in our resolution, in our courageous action, in the constant renewing of our minds, and in a fiery faith. To everyone comes the angel with "the glad tidings that that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God", and each is born not alone, but with the symbols of fortitude and loyalty, of faith and humility, of love and protection standing near, as they stood near him in a stable, if our eyes can read the signs.

Yes, and you who have ears stopped can listen and hear if you will. It is difficult for us to awaken you to your full opportunity; we cannot shake you into realization of the way you should go for your own protection, for your beloveds, for the world, but we have tried to give you a sort of manual to train yourselves to keep young, fluent, and full of faith; for human events so charged with emotion and terror are very difficult to manage if one has no manual nor the divine advantage. The little people drift down into sleep, turn their faces from realities, so that when they are confronted with cruelty and savagery they lose their balance and add to the general weight of despair; they have not made their faith an actuality. Do not think this is selfish protection for our own bodies and souls; we tell you that it is a dedication to the way that will bring healing and peace. When you walk in immortality, there is neither big nor little, and when you "deny yourself" by making clear the way for the Spirit, you are giving Light to the world – giving It when of yourself you do nothing. What is asked of you is to keep this Light burning brightly in quietness and to carry your illumination with you always. *Your lamp must not go out*, and it will not if you obey your childlike instinct. This is no time to beat one's hands against doors of brass, to rage at injustice, human evil and materialism; lift your hearts high above the storms of hatred and fear. A great role can be yours if you will be simple, and in all tenderness and love and assurance we ask you again to stand in the Light and not waver. You cannot understand events and their causes, but you do know that keeping your emotional centers where they belong is your safety, and by so doing you help profoundly in the regeneration that will come to pass. We ask that you prepare yourselves to be beacons.

We have heard you say you are tired of waiting. For your life's sake, plunge into the immortal living Presence *now* and you will not "wait". One has said, "If thou dost every hour throw thyself by faith beyond all creatures, beyond all reasoning into the abyssal mercy of God, then thou shalt receive His power". Do you not see, do you not yet comprehend that Love within is the beginning of all things, and that you are forever beginning? Always renewing, always being reborn.

That is the eternal holy gift, and in this time release thyself to the fullness of joy in the star that shines, in the Child that is born.

Letter 93

Let us during this time rise up out of the valley, out of the plains, above the forest line, above the mountains into the clean air, into the realm where thought itself melts into instinct and is stilled. Open to receive and rest...

After this refreshment, I would recall to your remembrance the meaning of the spiritual law; how you obey it is your affair; we can only make suggestions and tell you not to be too cast down when you do not receive, during these days of anxiety, all that you seek for in inspiration. When man seeks to perfect himself, he always makes false starts and goes through intervals of disappointment, thoughtlessness and sleepwalking periods. Artists know this. How you need to work toward your goal is for you to discover and to decide, but we can tell you that nothing can release you so much as your awareness and sense of oneness with the Presence of God. There is strength given you when you work out your salvation; be self-reliant and stand alone, and then the sharing will be added unto you as good measure. Today clothe yourselves in your invisible shining armor, so that no evil come nigh your thought, and if you are tired, fast from news and idle talk. A sane austerity and self-discipline, if not carried too far, are good, for this eternal fight between the human and the divine nature is an eternal struggle. When you disobey your own divine desires, you find yourselves uncomfortable, soiled and in need of spiritual cleansing; so again we remind you to rise above the desert, the forest line, breathe the mountain air.

"O Holy Spirit, hold me in Thy gentleness within, keep me from strain; keep me in Thy radiant Presence, keep me awake and from the sleep of forgetfulness, keep me in remembrance of my immortality, of Thy power within. I know that I am in Thy love; keep me illumined and untarnished. Teach me to play my part. Amen."

Letter 94

If you will observe what has been given you during the past few years of your discipleship, you will find that it is a quality of feeling to inspire you and give you faith and courage; a realization of the nearness of the Spirit of the Father. What is not revealed to you is the *why*; why you were born at this time; why you met and chose this person or that one; why there is light and dark; why there is joy and pain. In a moment of dread and anxiety you turn to God in silence, as you have been inspired to do from the beginning, and even that is beyond you, also. Why you sense a quality of rest and comfort and assurance welling up within you in spite of the seemingly hopeless future of the human race is because hope is indeed eternal; it is a knowledge, a wisdom; it partakes of the nature of all eternal qualities. Your sense of comfort that comes to you by stilling thought does not come by your effort to still thought; you, rather, induce an active force instantly, and the less you think of how it works, the better it works, the stronger is the reassurance. You have nothing to fear, then, when you sit with a pure desire and a good heart in quietness and stillness. There are no words to tell of it because it is beyond the human experience of man and it is more powerful for good than all the contrivances of man for the destruction of man. There is nothing you think about that is useful at this moment; be silent and you will be aware of the signs and wonders. You receive a luminous spirit and an anxious thought disappears; you will have a still sense of comfort, of renewal; that is all there is. There is no sermon to be heard, no book to be read; it is all contained in "Be still and know that I am God". There is nothing else.

During these times, do not be drawn down suddenly into the pit of fear. Dismiss the alarm with all your might and main and keep to your illumined word. Let not dismay put out your lamp and loosen the scaffold of your resolution to abide forevermore in the Word that will set you free.

Letter 95

You say the difficult problem for you is to hold your realization and not, after a communion, have it vanish. You want to keep your awareness, hold your soul. As you go on, you will find this easier, like all habits, or pleasures, even. You will find the communions, the times of quiet meditation, an instructing experience. When you ask for wisdom for your daily living and truth for inspiration, they will be revealed to you if you are steadfast. Truth is stern in its revelation and serene in realization, and only in obedience will you be comforted. The sternness lies in your being awakened to your disordered and undisciplined states. Once again we return to the simplicities and recall to your memory that in turbulent times, when the mind is image-making, you whip and drum up the issues to such an extent that the excitement gets out of control and the mind and emotions race hysterically. Again we tell you to sink down three fathoms below the storm, where the stillness is; here where all things are accomplished, the quiet where all things are done. When you come to the surface, you will bring some of this calm, this undisturbed space with you; and the more you do this under stress, the more involuntary it will become, so that eventually your mind will first seek the divine instead of human wisdom, which is largely relative. Turn to the source for all needs, and you will discover that your realization will last longer and longer between your journeys to the well of living water.

“O Christ dwelling within me, give me knowledge, knowledge of thyself in relation to my living, day by day. Give me thy Spirit of eternal life now, on the earth, in the elements, in the world. Feed my mind with thy living bread; quench my thirst for thee with living water from the well of life.”

One of you has said, “It is hard for me to be still with honest intent; my mind breaks into a thousand butterflies when I reach forward to grasp the pearl of great price, and when I reach out my hand to God, my hand disappears and I am over the hill and far away!” Indeed that is true of all beginners. The only harm in it is believing it cannot be overcome – in accepting the idea that your mind cannot be won if your heart desires it. But do not push, nor make an effort. “Leave all quietly to God, my soul”, for it is the gift of beauty and comes only with joy. Realize that the emotional self is not now the complete master; melt into the invisible serenity of God in you and the healing rays will go forth doing the works.

Let not him who seeks cease until he finds, and when he finds he shall be astonished. Astonished he shall reach the Kingdom, and having reached the Kingdom he shall rest.

Traditional Sayings of Jesus

Letter 96

There is a temptation for the so-called reasonable mind to be suspicious of this escape to a dream place. But where else can you escape? Where else are things born? In the states that confront the world at this time, the confusion is augmented if you have within you a spirit of anger and resentment, and if you hold grimly to the accomplishment hoped for. When you come within, come wholly; make your resolution before you come, and then leave, when you come, all else behind. Come into this transcendent place of creative peace and light... then it will be done. The Spirit you seek helps you to be faithful and will hold you to your gains, and the old challenges, which you face personally and nationally, can only be met in this way by those who seek the truth. The freedom that comes from the renunciation of materialism, to be loosened from fear of lack when there is lack, are experiences which have come to all those who have sought dominion; it is the way to protection. The spiritual place that you reach in your communions is the gateway to that freedom; pass through naked and you will not be hurt; you will be taken care of.

You have undertaken a Homeric task, for the world and all in it are suffering from soul sickness; the air you breathe is full of it, of anxiety and pain, of hysteria and savagery; but those who can find safe haven in the spiritual awareness of their own godhood, awareness of the Spirit within them, not only stand near to the love of God, but lift the race with them. Whenever you draw near the secret place, you do not go entirely alone; you take mankind with you. It is one way of serving your neighbor. It is never a selfish thing, for by the healing and renewing of your own Spirit you send out light to all consciousness. This is as scientific as the fact that in the physical world you cannot lift your hand without vibrations caused by your gesture being felt throughout it. How infinitely more is felt the victories of the inner you; into what far reaches of darkness in another may your light shine without a spoken word!

We are the servants of the Lord but His Minstrels.

St. Francis of Assisi, 1182-1226

Letter 97

Let us consider the past years when in the beginning we met through these communions; like children you half believed it, it remained to you as definite as a story in symbol, instantly forgotten. You were brought back again and led away by events, the little events of daily life; great events bring you back quickly, but inertias smother you. Within the mind the spiritual entity was nebulous, out of focus, but it has gradually become more defined and this communion easier; yet it is still difficult for you to live your daily lives in awareness always of the infinite beauty that never leaves you, no matter if the mind is turned away from it. The magnet of the life about you, what you call actuality, is so absorbing the contact is broken, though for shorter periods, and the divine power is now so established that it draws you back, but it would be well for you to study yourselves objectively in this matter. This awareness should not be a divided thing, feeling Him one time and then having long intervals of forgetfulness. It is rather that you feel Him within you, beside you and about you actually while in different environments. Keep the contact if you can as an undertone or overtone; carry your stillness with you. Instead of walking with God, you so often walk with feverish thought which tires you and lowers your vitality and resistance. Where are the thoughts of yesterday, last month, last year? Where are the busy exciting interests of the past decade gone?

You know that the communions in stillness have not gone; they have remained, each adding more and more power and understanding to the realization of the living Presence; this you bear witness to, that each withdrawal from the world of appearances to the world of eternal love has been a building of a structure, a living invisible temple not made with hands, and each withdrawal was a stone chiseled and squared that you placed in position until the edifice is high and strong and good. Yes, indeed silence, profound silence, deeper than thought, deeper than your five senses, deeper than any experience you have known will grow more and more powerful and the Word will be made flesh to heal and straighten your lives and bring you abundance of peace in these days of war. Do not underestimate how important this is, for by living with this divine source of peace you help to restore it to the world. Abide in the very core, the secret place of the most High. No orders are given you, for this must be done through love which will give you inward fortitude. Be dismayed by nothing; keep this inward contact secure in your outward living for this is being in the ark of salvation, and this is the way to keep yourselves channels for the Spirit to pour through to those who walk in darkness. Hold your light high by being faithful and abiding in his words.

Letter 98

Today we speak of the realization of the black and white of daily living; now one thing and now another. See these states; they seem to come out of a bag and surround us. They are very real while they last, these times of fermentation and doubt. It seems to you that there can be no light or hope, and the days are gray and dark. *Much of this is steam rising from you, and you make your own fog.* When understood, it is a sign of growth; but you will feel better, feel cleansed, when you have the understanding to ponder on the strangeness of these states, as being unreal and not of truth. The healing of the Spirit comes in these times of realization. Don't you begin to see that these moments are self-made and lie in your own responses? Your release lies in taking these moments, both the star moments and the nettles, and in holding them in each hand while you consider them. By this act of the free will, you become a master, for at last you take your appointed place in your own unfoldment.

This dwelling upon your own states is not a dangerous knitting of the brows in introspection, for there is no self-love in the process, neither is there pride nor self-pity. To know yourself, you must become impersonal and selfless; then with that calm, impersonal knowledge, which is given to you in cooling draughts, you will free and cleanse yourself of the states and the events which made them so very real and ungovernable. In this way, you make yourself free; a little at a time perhaps, but you have discovered the principle, and the rest follows.

Now, do you not perceive that Christ in you cannot be apart like a phantom? No, no! He demands the outer you as well as your inner self to make the perfect whole.

You are here, now, at this place, at this time, in this room, in your world, in the scheme of this moment, and you have never been at this moment before. Well, then, take this moment and instead of letting it wing through the mind as nothing, receive it as a divine gift and place it in the chalice, holding it up as high as you can reach. That is how you help all other persons at their stations – now at this moment. See nations this way; open and enlarge the realization of each moment; enlarge the *now*. This is how inspiration will pour into your life for, oh, it is so important not to drop the moments on the floor! Hold them up into the light when all the currents and tides are against you; every time you raise a low impulse to the highest, those nearest you are lifted and changed. In this way are destructive emotions transmuted, like water into steam, a driving force for good. Nature demands lawlessly and hungrily and, if indulged, will consume and destroy you by her spendthrift lack of restraint.

Do you not see that by doing this, you literally bring order out of chaos and create a new world? Nature is made to obey the great law that will uplift the human race.

By allowing the fear of being ineffectual to enter into the state of prayer and by wishing to accomplish something myself, I spoilt it all.

St. Jeanne de Chantel, 1572-1641

Letter 99

The times are very, very big and potent. The only hope is to be bigger than the times and more potent. What needs to be realized is your own importance in the scheme. You have been told to stand to your full stature. This may sound silly to you, but if everyone did this, everything would be kept in its proper place, and beauty and order and rightness would fall out of the sky like magic. That is why reformers fail; they do not work from the inside out. If they would but look up into the sky above, they could bring down the kingdom of heaven to this weary and bewildered earth.

Of course it is necessary to discipline the appetite for rage, emotional regrets, and all the things that rough and tumble life presents to you, but really there are only two things, the darkness of despair and greed, and the light of eternal joy – either black or white. By merely turning your face away from darkness to light, you are in light, and darkness does not exist for you. Mathematics! Impersonal and as clean as that. That is why it seems so stern to the sentimentalists who think God should do every little thing for them. No, each one has to go through the process of finding out that the fight with materialism, and all the cynical forces, is one where he or she fights alone, and the fight is choosing the idea, or awakening to the idea; and new ideas are always painful to the unspiritual.

Those who plan too well, like certain generals, never achieve in the hour of crisis. Those who plan too well are those who become in love with their own system.

Those who are creative, open, released, free, growing and alive will, in times of crisis, receive the great flashes of inspiration which save nations. All is in the approach. If you approach the spiritual growth by planning, you will delay your progress. But if you approach it in the true way, you will find no obstruction. By falling in love with the spiritual state, you will solve the riddle of how to be always aware of the Presence. That is the problem of you who are where you are now. It is as if, when unaware of that which you truly desire most, you step into black pockets and life is blank – out of order. Now Love is order; it is beauty, it is living mathematics. It is a vital organizer.

Another way to look upon this problem of your spiritual evolution is to regard your outer you as one you would educate. What are you trying to bring forth in this outer self? – a living consciousness of oneness with God. Look at this outer you as if he were a youth stepping forth into life delayed by temptations along the way, wasting noble gifts on nonessentials; lotus eating.

He finds himself in certain states of psychic sleep, of emotional cul-de-sacs which numb the imagination, often poisoning it. What does your God want for this outer you? He wants you to hold Him and lift Him to his full height, shaking off inertia, indolence, drifting; for so much of the hurt and pain comes through omission – blank states. It is like the vacuum formed in the sky which brings about the tornado. Beware of vacuums! Fill them with light and the still, eternal, joyful Spirit of a tender and loving God.

The stoics and religious fanatics went the outside way by fasting, by penance and by monastic routine. Many found peace of a kind, but the pearl of great price was not often theirs; the pearl of great price can be yours but for the loving.

Beware of the emotions that are hosts to violence.

M. A. W.

Letter 100

Today we will be “practical”. It is true that if you have as much faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will bring balance and order into your daily life. When you start a new enterprise, you pray and you go on your way carrying your light. What happens? You meet other souls in different stages of their development, with different grades of intelligence and because of their strength, their ambitions and self-interests, you are bound to be in conflict. See this with the eye of reality, but never with criticism nor personal condemnation; for their lacks, their weaknesses of character are not your business and must not be regarded with self-justification or excuse. They, too, are on their way. Your problem is not to be immediately moved by the forces they let loose so that your light is blown out in the strain of adjustment and pressure. That is why faith is so hard to hold in the midst of lack of faith; but you must realize that your character, the galaxy of attributes which you call yourself, is either weakened or made stronger by the dismay among personalities when one is tempted to shrink into the darkness of fear.

Now, fear being the antithesis of faith, it can be used as one would use a force. When you go out in the morning to meet the old antagonist in the problems and personalities of the day, face it as a challenge, or, rather, as an angel to wrestle with, your weapon being your faith. The angel is guardian to the

gate of all faith, as it were. Perhaps he will speak through the mouths of any persons and you hear, "You cannot". "It is no use." "It will fail." "Why go on?" He is the examiner who tests your moral courage, your weapon of faith. Because you have let your mind be emotionally caught up so that it races, he will get under your guard and catch you unawares. Every man meets this in any endeavor. Perhaps I ought to make it clear that I do not mean an angel has been sent, nor that evil is goodness; but, like Jacob, you can make an angel of your antagonist who will bless you.

Consider a game of chess or tennis: in both you meet an antagonist and your will to win must dominate you, must control your skill so that if your guard is broken, you will keep cool and vigilant. This overtone of feeling will coordinate your body involuntarily; and your sense of mastery, because of your will to win being paramount, will give inspiration and success. But if, because of a streak of bad playing, you are angered or excited, you will be thrown off your guard.

Let faith be the overtone of your day; faith and the rightness of your cause. Fill yourself with the light and illumination of the Spirit within you and go out into the material world where you will instantly meet the counter-plays of humans like yourself, seeking to win; some, perhaps, by hook or by crook. Because of your mustard seed of faith, when rightly understood, you will by practice not lose your temper, not be dismayed, not let fear weaken your moral fiber, and you will be inspired and made strong, and your adversary will stand aside and open the gate, because you have played honorably with yourself and with him, through your faith in your indwelling Wisdom and Power. It will be a victory far greater than the material consequences of your striving. Do not any longer be sleepwalkers! This vigilance means complete awareness, an awareness of being illumined or in the dark.

Be dismayed by nothing. Watch the plays of your antagonist with humor and good sportsmanship, and hold to your will to faith; then is the time when all that is glorious can work best for you. Study your moral fiber, ponder on this; faith is infinite, infinite is His love.

I am sure there is a common Spirit that plays within us, yet makes no part of us; and that is the Spirit of God; ... this is that gentle heat that broodeth on the waters and in six days hatched the world; this is that irradiation that dispels the mists of hell, the clouds of horror, fear, sorrow, despair; and preserves the region of the mind in serenity. Whatsoever feels not the warm gale and gentle ventilation of the Spirit (though I feel his pulse) I dare not say he lives; for truly without this, to me there is no heat under the Tropick; nor any light, though I dwell in the body of the sun.

Sir Thomas Browne, 1605-1682

Letter 101

There is an outer ring of yourself surrounded by turbulence, chaos and anxiety; great moments swirling about, cosmic in potentiality. Within this ring is another circle outside of which are your responses to all these alarms and insistent shocks, excitements and dismays. Inside this ring is another ring. This is a place where you sense your ignorances, your unwarenesses, your inadequacies. Here is where you are sorely tried, for this is your human self. And so these rings get smaller as you near the center where you find a place in you that longs for peace, calmness and spiritual understanding. Finally there is the center which seems to the imagination within a very small circumference. Here is where you are; here is a place where you decide; here is where you are yourself. Most people seldom find it except in great moments; and yet when found and realized it encircles the universe. This is the quietness; this is the peace promised to those who seek. For this center lifts you high and clear of all the rings into eternal omniscient vision; here, when your mind is fastened to it and all your thoughts and all desires are pointed toward it, is the Spirit that will lead you through the valleys of the shadows of death, violence and hates and all the confusion that beset you and your country and your world at this time.

Hold to this center. You can only reach it in silence; you can only keep it in quietness; you can only feel it in serenity; this is the place of the pearl of great price. Carry the silence of your guarded center with you, guarded by the thoughts you have accepted. This is the way of a son of God. Every man in ordinary life presents a character which is instantly felt; everyone is revealed sooner or later; the vagaries of the human personality betray us. But the quietness of the realm I speak of is a steadying strength not of our making though of our accepting, and what is given forth from it is felt also. Remember always to acknowledge this; "of myself I can do nothing". What you have done is to seek the kingdom and having found it, your task is to hold it, and that is a task indeed, for emotions, personalities can steal you away out among the outer rings; your thoughts, instead of being pointed toward your center, race away into the mad dance.

Come back, come back and in holy stillness be lifted high above all this! Your dominion over yourself and the circumstances of your life can be glorious if you will keep your center clean, illumined and still in immortal silence. Here is selflessness; here is revealed true knowledge, wisdom, power and courage; the dignity of courage which is loyal to that which is not your human self. You will be given divine strategy in dealing with seemingly hopeless difficulties. The hates, criticisms, annoyances, the instinctive dislikes... keep them in the outer circumference. Turn your face away; turn it within toward that which is shining there. This is the kingdom of heaven. This is the task most needed now for yourself, for your loved ones, for your time. Each one anchored in this omnipotent stillness strengthens the soul of your nation.

"I never leave thee nor forsake thee, thou art in my keeping."

Letter 102

Down the ages man has attempted through the discipline of monastic orders, hermitage and certain severe retirements from the world, to hold his half-awakened consciousness to the nearness of the Presence of that which beats his heart and gives him life, gives him Life. Naked you are born, naked you die; it is seldom realized that naked and defenseless you live. Your defenselessness, humanly speaking, is exposed nakedly to a thousand dangers seen and unseen. A draught of air can dissolve you into eternity; and hatred, hidden and lodged deep within, can fester and destroy you. All these you can multiply for yourself. As a human you have no grip on life, however strong, healthy and outwardly protected you may be. Your only safety, fortress and eternal protection is your realization of the nearness of the Presence of the Spirit; then you are clothed in the Spirit and not naked. And by abiding in the Spirit, old ignorances are brought to the surface and released and you are made aware of those seeds of destruction within. These are your delayers and why it has taken you so long. If you had retired into a monastic life and given over your vigilance to others to keep for you in an ordered existence, regimented so that your emotional nature would be lulled by routine, you would have attained peace of a secondary plane; these planes have their purpose, but you, who have chosen the difficult task, are healthier because you have asked for realization of the nearness and the actuality of the Spirit within, in a worldly, distracting, confusing life of alarms, of shocks, changes, stupidities and challenging despairs. You know that you are naked and defenseless. You stand alone with your desire to be at-one-with, to be aware of, to be in the Presence, while at the same time you must deal with the interruptions and delays, the temptations and appetites which, indulged in, act like sleeping draughts.

I tell you that the Spirit can overcome the sword and pain and sorrow; the Spirit completely realized will guide and protect you and lead you through all dangers; It will give you strength, power and inward peace. This is the reward of eternal vigilance of the realization of Him as your companion.

Be sanctified, be unbound, be free, be purified and aware of the Spirit, of love and joy, power and protection. Do not be the foolish ones who, in the bright sunlight, walketh and standeth in the dark tunnel and forget the light, and cannot picture it. Arise and come forth out of your restricted human life, here and now, and when you are by yourselves say these words:

"I open the doors of my heart wide knowing that the everlasting fountain of Thy light will pour forth and fill my life. I will be vigilant in guarding these doors that they shall not close of themselves because of my forgetfulness. I rest here with my heart open to receive knowing that I am in the center of all things. I rest in gratitude and thanksgiving that the Spirit has filled this heart as a spring to break open and pour forth into my world. I will not be shut by violence nor any untoward event. My sole intent is to keep these doors open for my very life's sake for I believe that out of the issues of my heart I shall be guided upon my journey and I shall be given strength."

O make in me those civil wars to cease!

Sir Philip Sidney, 1554-1586

What means fast, then? "Lo, this is the fast which I have chosen, saith the Lord. Loose every band of wickedness."

St. Clement of Alexandria, A.D. 150-220

Who would decline a sacrifice if once his soul had been accosted, his virtue recognized, and he was assured that a Watcher, a Holy One followed him ever with long affectionate glances of inexhaustible love.

Emerson's *Journal*

Letter 103

When you sit in silence it is as if you were in an ocean, vast, imperceptible, mysterious, so much is big and beyond you, and yet the mind of man, dwelling as it does in the elements, through desire, concentration and meditation has been inspired from within to touch the unseen Principle in some of its many manifestations. A turbine engine, a watch, all such ordered evidences are witnesses of the unseen. Man using his mind as an instrument has dipped into the ocean of the unseen around him, and has out of this made visible and practical the machines to make his life more comfortable. Forever and forever he puts his faith in that which he has made, forgetting that it is but a small part of the great oneness from which we can get everything we need. There is power; there is joy and knowledge and wisdom. However great the storm, in the center of that ocean there is peace and life itself; all that you need as son of God. So shape your desire and live as His son.

Man has instinctively known there is a beneficent quality in the living Principle within him because it has revealed itself in man's growth toward light. Therefore if it is essentially a principle of order, of rightness in all manifestations of material life, it is reasonable to assume that with confidence and an acceptance of the idea-Principle as perfect harmony, it is your business to make it your own. You can leave confusion behind and bathe your maladjustment in the Light that will heal it.

This conflict is beyond your human everyday understanding. It is partly the removal of much disease and ignorance. Suffice it for you to be undismayed, trusting to the beneficent Principle in the hearts of men who are now recognizing it swiftly; those who are in the realization of its power will be protected and give great things to the world. This is a time of crisis and both your lacks and spiritual

fulfillments are being revealed. So fill yourselves with Light, stay in it, manifest it in your bodies, dip into this ocean with your lack and fill it! Do not accept the concepts of old age, disease and pain. Be in the vanguard of the great changes in the great days of crises. Out with these old ideas, and vibrate to the iron string that has been struck and say, "I am free from stagnation, I am an open clear channel, knowing that courage and faith will be given me when I stand in the protection of the eternal immortal present as a son of God!"

By faith... he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.

Hebrews 11:27

For behold the Word, which is the Wisdom of God, is in thy heart as a Light unto thy feet and lanthorn unto thy paths. It is there as a speaking Word of God in thy soul; and as soon as thou art ready to hear, this eternal speaking Word will speak Wisdom and Love in thy inward parts and bring forth the birth of Christ, with all His holy nature, spirit and tempers, within thee. Hence it was that so many eminent spirits, partakers of the Divine Life have appeared in so many parts of the heathen world; glorious names, as lights hung out by God... These were the apostles of a Christ within.

William Law, 1686-1761

Letter 104

In the effort to struggle with human obstructions, feelings and thoughts, *your* thoughts and feelings take on the heaviness of their human origin. That is the difficulty of the life of human effort; that is what makes fatigue and despondency and eventually becomes a physical handicap. It is these heavy thoughts that soil you. These communions restore you, because during the time of your quiet receiving from the source of the Spirit, you are bathed in the waters of life. This will keep you pure in heart and your bodies sweet with the Spirit; so illumined that you will not be fouled in the mire of human living.

Therefore when effort is required of you in an endeavor which calls for high intelligence, give it to the Spirit within you to do; let Him within you do the work as you were told, and you will pass among the heavy, selfish, material lives untouched and you will not be soiled, and your body and your Spirit will be protected and forever refreshed. You will not then have reactions, because the world will not have dominion over you.

This is the mystery of the sacrament of living waters of baptism, daily baptism. Even in your daily bathing it would be healing for you to take it as a symbol of cleansing your spiritual body so that the presentment of your living self will be an inspiration of living purity. All that you have ever been told, all that you have sensed of the Spirit is reduced to the simple instruction... keep in touch with your divine companion in all the ways of your life.

We understand the power of materialism, we understand the morning hope you light your candle from, the Light of Ages within you. You go forth into material life and lo, the light of the candle is blown out and forgotten by the impact of this startling world of realities, so hard and bright.

Then coming home at night, you cannot find the way to light so as to reillumine the candle because you are full of the thoughts that have been superimposed, that have darkened the child of the Spirit that started out so hopefully. Some of you say, "Is the lesson ever learned? Must I always begin at the beginning? Here I receive surcease, here comfort is restored, here I bathe in full lighted inspiration – to be rolled in the mire of material conflict..."

I tell you, each time a little more is gained, a little more is realized, a little more is made part of the regeneration. It is a mighty task, and yet it is the simplest. Now that the winds of calamity and despair are blowing in all directions, aside from the personal, insistent life of your foreground, you are challenged even more to be spiritually vigilant in your constant awareness. But your Comforter is not of this world, and never leaves nor forsakes you. Oh listen, listen all the day through!

*Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehm be born,
And not within thyself, thy soul will be forlorn.*

Pamela Grey, b. 1871

*Clouded and shrouded, there doth sit
The Infinite
Embosomed in a man; ...
Then bear thyself, O man!
Up to the scale and compass of thy Guest;
... Be great as doth beseem
The ambassador who bears
The royal Presence where he goes.*

Emerson's Journal

For the spiritual life is as much its own proof as the natural life, and needs no outward or foreign thing to bear witness to it.

William Law, 1686

The tendency of modern physics is to resolve the whole material universe into waves and nothing but waves; these are waves of two kinds; bottled up waves which we call matter and unbottled waves which we call radiation or light. If annihilation of matter occurs, the process is merely that of unbottling imprisoned wave energy and letting it fall to travel through space. These concepts reduce the whole universe to a world of light, potential and existent, so that the whole story of creation can be told with perfect accuracy and completeness in the six words, "God said, 'Let there be light.'"

Sir James Jeans, 1877-1946

*He that wonders shall reign; and he that reigns shall rest.
Look with wonder at that which is before you.*

Traditional Sayings of Jesus, St. Clement of Alexandria, A.D. 150-220

My mystery is for me and the sons of my house.

Traditional Sayings of Jesus, St. Clement of Alexandria, A.D. 150-220

Jesus saith, Wherever... there is one... alone, I am with him. Raise the stone and there thou shalt find me, cleave the wood and there am I.

The Logia Jesu, taken from an early Greek papyrus dated A.D. 150-300, found at Oxyrhynchus, 1987

... I receive, in proportion to my obedience, truth from God; I put myself aside and let Him be.

Emerson's Journal

*... Refrain tonight;
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence: the next more easy;
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
And master ev'n the devil or throw him out
With wondrous potency.*

Hamlet, Act III Scene IV, Shakespeare

*It is by yourself without ambassador that God speaks to you. You are as
one who has a private door that leads him to the king's chamber.*

Emerson's Journal

*I will rejoice that from all tormenting we can retreat always upon the
Invisible Heart, upon the Celestial Love, and that not to be soothed
merely, but to be replenished, not to be compensated, but to receive
power to make all things new.*

Emerson, From a Letter

Paramahansa Yogananda

Sanjaya means, literally, *completely victorious*; ‘one who has conquered himself’. He alone who is not self-centered has the ability to see clearly and to be impartial. Thus, in the Gita, *Sanjaya* is divine insight; for the aspiring devotee, *Sanjaya* represents the power of impartial intuitive self-analysis, discerning introspection. It is the ability to stand aside, observe oneself without any prejudice, and judge accurately. Thoughts may be present without one’s conscious awareness. Introspection is that power of intuition by which the consciousness can watch its thoughts. It does not reason, it feels – not with biased emotion, but with clear, calm intuition.

The earnest enquiry by the blind King Dhritarashtra, seeking an unbiased report from the impartial Sanjaya as to how fared the battle between the Kurus and the Pandavas at Kurukshetra, is metaphorically the question to be asked by the spiritual aspirant as he reviews daily the events of his own righteous battle from which he seeks the victory of Self-realization. Through honest introspection he analyzes the deeds and assesses the strengths of the opposing armies of his good and bad tendencies: self-control versus sense indulgence, discriminative intelligence opposed by mental sense inclinations, spiritual resolve in meditation contested by mental resistance and physical restlessness, and divine soul-consciousness against the ignorance and magnetic attraction of the lower ego-nature.

Only little by little, with fierce determination in battle, could the Pandavas win back their kingdom.

A grasping for ever more money, a plunging deeper into more prolonged work with attachment or blindness, will produce misery. Yet mere outward renunciation of material things, if one still harbors an inner attachment to them, leads only to hypocrisy and delusion. To avoid the pitfalls of the two extremes, renunciation of the world, or drowning in material life, man should so train his mind by constant meditation that he can perform the necessary dutiful actions of his daily life and still maintain the consciousness of God within. That is the example set by Krishna’s life. Sri Krishna’s message in the Bhagavad Gita is the perfect answer for the modern age, and any age: Yoga of dutiful action, of nonattachment, and of meditation for God-realization. To work without the inner peace of God is Hades; and to work with His joy ever bubbling through the soul is to carry a portable paradise within, wherever one goes.

The path advocated by Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita is the moderate, medium, golden path, both for the busy man of the world and for the highest spiritual aspirant. To follow the path advocated by the Bhagavad Gita would be their salvation, for it is a book of universal Self-realization, introducing man to his true Self, the soul – showing him how he has evolved from Spirit, how he may fulfill on earth his righteous duties, and how he may return to God.

Unless present actions are guided by wisdom, and thereby carry no binding impressions, new karmic effects will replace those that have been justly compensated. So long as karmic effects from past and present action do not fade away by being worked out or dissolved by wisdom, it is impossible to attain final emancipation.

Every desire, (...) whether acted on or not, is soon followed by another. Such desires for the gratification of ego do not cease even when they are supposedly satisfied; in every worldly accomplishment or every attainment of a material possession, something always remains unfulfilled. Desire-seeds are born of these ego-instigated active desires. Every unfulfilled active desire, unless roasted by wisdom, plants a new desire-seed in the mind. These desire-seeds are more compelling than impulsive fresh desires, deeply rooting themselves in the subconscious, ready to spring up suddenly with demands that are most often unreasonable, frustrating, and sorrow-producing. As desire begets desires, the only way to end the cycle is to destroy the causes.

The very nature of habit is automatic compulsion to do what one has become accustomed to do. Habits go on repeating their same old pattern, often ignoring a desire's new command. (...) Without ego's attachment to the body, there would be no material desire, and without desire, there would be no *samsakara*, or habit. Conversely, ego can be slain if not protected by habit or material desire. Thus ego, in his own defense, initiates the call to arms. (...) this means that during deep meditation, when the breath has become calm, producing a very enjoyable state of peace wherein the mind is withdrawn from the senses, the worried ego rouses in the devotee the thought of body identification, reviving the restless breath, which is like a lion's roar compared to the absolute stillness of the interiorized meditative state. As soon as the devotee resumes his 'natural' practice of dependency on fast breathing (...), the material desire of the body is aroused and cheered on to rally the senses against the powers of meditation. The devotee should not be discouraged at this, which is due to a lack of long-continued practice of meditation. The truth is, in the earlier stages of meditation all devotees find their limited body-consciousness resisting expansion into omnipresence. The ego, through material desire and his sense army, uses all kinds of tactics to drive away the blissful consciousness of omnipresent spirit that manifests only in meditative stillness. Any vibration sent forth by ego during meditation helps to awaken material desire to revive the consciousness of the body and dispel the consciousness of Spirit. By deeper and longer concentration, the meditating *yogi* must learn to hold on to the hard-won territory of calmness of breath and senses, in spite of the efforts of ego and the army of sense distractions of material desire.

The scriptures and masters do instruct the devotee not to destroy the actual senses, but to slay their bad habits. The devotee is not asked to blind his eyes, deafen his ears, nor to paralyze his senses of smell, taste, and touch. He is directed only to dislodge the enemies of optical, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, and tactual attachments, which keep the soul imprisoned and forgetful of its omnipresent kingdom. When all sensory attachments – unwholesome lure of physical beauty, love of flattery and of words of temptation, bondage of greed,

attraction of sex – are dislodged from the matrixes of the senses, it is then that the senses relinquish their material prejudices, inclinations, instincts, and obsessions; they become ready to be attached only to divine bliss. When false argument invades the mind of the devotee, he should suggest to himself: 'By the repetition of my ignorance-born evil actions and bad habits initiated by me, I have been compelled to love sense pleasures. Now I will undo all the evils by substituting good actions through the exercise of self-control, until good habits are firmly formed. I will substitute for the evil habit of sensory restlessness the good habit of calmness in meditation. My good habits will so convert my senses that I may truly say that I see, smell, taste, touch, hear, think, and feel only that which is good.' This is the challenge for the strong-minded, self-controlled devotee. Halfheartedness will not suffice.

Those who equally enjoy sensory indulgences and meditational pleasures will not get anywhere for a long time. 'A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.'

A very good habit to cultivate is the one of meditating immediately upon awakening from sleep.

It may take from eight to twelve years to substitute a good habit for a strong bad habit. Before the strong good habit is fully formed, a man must not put himself in the way of temptation. (...) To starve out bad habits, one must get away from evil surroundings; and above all, one must never dwell mentally on evil thoughts. The latter reinforces the influence of the former and is more dangerous. One must fortify himself with the right outer environment and the right inner environment.

Man is plagued by such soul-humiliating defeats at the hands of his own particular habits until his consciousness is securely anchored in his true, divine nature. The sensory functions have their rightful place in man's life only after he has subordinated them by realizing himself as the soul, one with Spirit, not a body subject to sense domination.

There is a fundamental purpose to our lives. We must look beyond our immediate goals to what we ultimately want to accomplish, and consider life's highest potential for development.

Fill your consciousness with true, lasting happiness. Lo! All too soon life's vitality will evaporate from its little cup of flesh, and vanish forever into the mysterious unknown. (...) The sincere seeker must apply himself energetically. He must never rest until the heights of spiritual wisdom have been attained.

From the beginning of your spiritual life, delay no longer! Recall ever to mind those first, eager stirrings of divine longing – suppressed for endless lifetimes by your ego – to unravel the mystery of life and death. Withdraw into inner solitude. There, all those who, since ancient times, have achieved divine awakening have found the fulfillment of their soul's desire. Enter the sanctum sanctorum of inner peace.

When the devotee, abandoning the roses of sense-pleasure, withdraws his energy and consciousness from the outer surface of the body, he enters a vast inner region. His consciousness, rapt in blissful silence, becomes absorbed in the spinal plexuses and in the subtler workings of the brain. (...) The secret of withdrawing the consciousness and energy into the spine lies in deeper, and ever deeper, conscious relaxation.

While still you live in this body, teach the bird of life to sing God's holy, all protecting name. O devotee! Fly no longer in aimless circles above the shores of death, careless of any true and lasting purpose in life – lest you plunge at last to your destruction on that dark and rocky coast.

Behold! A thousand buds of worldly enjoyment burst into blossom, then shriveled and died. Perceptive souls cultivate a different sort of garden: inner stillness, wherein grow the fair flowers of soul qualities. (...) Only wisdom releases the soul from life's unceasing fluctuations: joy one day, sorrow the next; fulfillment one day, disappointment the next; life one day, death the next. (...) Countless human qualities, both bad and good, sprout and flourish in our personalities, then fade away over many incarnations while our souls wander in search of their innate divine perfection. Worldly life is ever unreliable. Freedom from all uncertainties can be attained only in God-consciousness – in oneness with the Infinite.

Pursue the ancient way (...) – the path to soul-emancipation. Souls appear continuously on earth, sing their piece, then slip away as they came, mysteriously. Let people be what they will: lazy or active, bored or engrossed in material pursuits. What does it matter? Be neither saddened nor elated by anything that occurs in this world. Let not outer attachments impede your soul's progress in its race toward inner freedom. O discerning one! rise above life's dualities, above the endless gradations of relativity. Lo! Every plan for success, so wantonly embraced; every looming disaster, so fearfully denied – all have as their sum total: zero! What are they but fictions, after all – fleeting mind-children in life's constantly changing dream. Ignore them! (...) It requires not great philosophic depth to brood pensively on the destinies of people and nations: on how some few rise to great heights, preen themselves in their noon hour, then fall to oblivion, losing everything they had. It requires simple observation, not wisdom, to see that those who glory in worldly power and wealth merely build sand castles of false pride. Too late do such people find that it takes but one wave of outward calamity to demolish all their material security and scatter their worldly pomp into sand. Those, too, who bear life's duties as a mere burden, failing to accept them joyously as opportunities for spiritual growth: What are they but donkeys, unmindful of the value of the gold they bear? Such people rarely pause to enjoy even a day of rest. They live heedlessly, eating, working, sleeping, and reproducing, falling a prey eventually to old age, disillusionment, and death. What karmic benefits have they accumulated in all their years of mindless drudgery? (...) Wisdom must be approached with a positive outlook. (...) Be neither elated nor depressed at anything outside yourself. Behold the passing spectacle of life with an even mind. For life's ups and downs are but waves on an ocean, constantly in flux. Shun emotional involvement with them,

while remaining ever calm, ever happy, at your inner center in the spine. World-weariness – the metaphysician's dour alternative to emotional excitement – is inadequate as a cure for life's sufferings, for it fosters an attitude of indifference, the progenitor of spiritual laziness. (...) Nurture your high, spiritual potentials, taking care not to scatter them in worthless pursuits. (...) Seek, above all, that which the wise have: God-consciousness; immortality in Him. Release into the Infinite every attachment – even the least of them. Let the world shout in outrage, or leap up and down in a hysteria or false joy. What matters it? It is all a parade – entertaining, colorful, but for all that only a parade, passing endlessly.

Between past and present; between consciously perceived and subconsciously retained knowledge; between all dualities – good and evil, joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain – demarking and at the same time uniting them, lies a dividing line of dimensionless awareness. This strip, once entered, opens onto vast realms of superconsciousness. Here, in ecstasy, soul-freedom is attained. From the perspective of this exalted state, the most powerful and universally envied human being is pitiable, living as he does in a state of spiritual poverty. (...) On the subconscious side, stretching out into the distance, lie buried countless impressions of past actions and experiences: our unfinished deeds and myriad unfulfilled desires. Though we have forgotten most of them, they will never forget us. The karmic law of cause and effect is inexorable. Emperors reap the consequences of their actions as infallibly as the meanest of their subjects. (...) The superconscious state begins at a fine dividing line between sleep and wakefulness. If you can catch your mind just at that moment as you are falling asleep, or at that fleeting instant before your consciousness rises to full wakefulness, you may be able to slip gently into semi-superconscious awareness, or enter into full superconsciousness. The more often you repeat this practice, the more clearly you will understand the reality of soul-freedom. By going daily into silence in deep meditation, you will arrive at ever more profound levels of superconsciousness. The inner bliss you'll experience at such times will give everlasting satisfaction to your soul. Once you have that inner joy, nothing on earth will ever tempt you again. Emperors pride themselves on their worldly power, but know in their hearts that the authority they wield is bluff and bluster, mainly, for they have no control over their own lives. They rejoice that others envy them their happiness, for popular envy assuages their need for reassurance. In their heart of hearts they know they are not happy. In superconsciousness, cosmic power and perfect bliss are the property of every soul. Thus, in divine ecstasy the soul views with pity and compassion those who are highly placed in this world, but miserable. (...) People everywhere, in their quest for happiness outside themselves, discover in the end that they've been seeking it in an empty cornucopia, and sucking feverishly at the rim of a crystal glass into which was never poured the wine of joy.

Happiness blooms naturally in the hearts of those who are inwardly free. It flows spontaneously, like a mountain spring after April showers, in minds that are contented with simple living and that willingly renounce the clutter of unnecessary, so-called necessities – the dream castles of a restless mind. 'Wilderness' implies the temporary sense of loss that often precedes fulfillment. When a person renounces outward ambition to seek peace within himself, (...)

after failing in his worldly endeavors, (...) newly flowering meadows of peace appear suddenly in minds that seek rest within. The soul then knows a happiness more precious than the greatest success attainable through worldly pursuits.

How few realize that circumstances will never give them what they crave, whether on earth or in the astral heavens. For happiness exists not where they imagine, outside themselves. Depend not on outer fulfillments: They are evanescent. The bounty that Nature bestows with her right hand she snatches away with her left. Worldly treasures can never be yours, for they are not you. Soul treasures, on the other hand, were fashioned at the dawn of eternity in the depths of your own being. Lasting power and happiness exist already in the inner Self. O Seeker! Cast earthly desires from your breast. Their fulfillments are yours on loan, merely. Claim what is yours eternally, by right. (...) To seek happiness outside ourselves is like trying to lasso a cloud. Happiness is not a thing. It is a state of mind. (...) worldly schemes can ever capture happiness. Mental restlessness results from an outward focus of awareness. (...) The more widely we scatter our energies, the less power we have left to direct toward any specific undertaking. Octopus habits of worry and nervousness rise from ocean depths in the subconscious, fling tentacles around our minds, and crush to death all that we once knew of inner peace. (...) The ego-gratification it gives is of the moment; lightly it passes to another. (...) True happiness is never to be found outside the Self. (...) Wisdom is a treasure that one can carry with him always. It is the ultimate source of all wealth, all power, all success.

Let the rose teach you: Mockingly she says, I appear in the world. How mankind admires me! How it delights in my delicate fragrance! – Such is the nature of all earthly pleasures: sweet-smelling, attractive! Ha! But how quickly they lose their bloom. Mere hours after they reach their peak, they peak, they pale and die. Earth pleasures, like blossoms in a garden, mock those who depend on the morning's dewy promise, and look not ahead to evening's disappointment and remorse. (...) Ah, tear out from your heart every dark attachment binding you to earth. With one brave stroke of wisdom, slice through the hardened stem of your sense-slavery! Spurn the allure of worldly pleasures, lest, even as you reach out eagerly to hold them, their blossoms will be torn off and blown away on a mocking wind. Analyze, with understanding born out of introspection, the true nature of sense-pleasures. For even as you delight in them, don't you sense in your heart a chilling breath of doubt and uncertainty? In the laughter of enjoyment, is there not a slight hint of desperation? (...) You cling to them, yet know in your heart that someday they cannot but betray you. Sense-pleasures, though they possess a certain wild beauty, reveal themselves at last to be merely tawdry. Like human beauty, they are skin deep because utterly shallow. They leave a person with a sense of inward emptiness, for they cannot satisfy his deeper longing for true joy. (...) What it offers is not freedom, but soul-bondage. (...) Can fallen petals be re-joined to the dying flower? Once roseate pleasures fade to disillusionment, their beauty can never be recaptured. Renewal can come only by cutting the central stem of attachment and, in a spirit of joyful abandon, tossing the petals of indulgence to the wind. Only by keen discrimination is it possible to perceive clearly the emptiness of material pleasures. Desire for them turns to disgust, and awakens a determination to tear out and fling away

altogether the seeds of further desires in the heart. The sense addict experiences pleasure's fickleness; he, too, arrives at disillusionment of a kind. By the time this mood develops in him, however, he has lost the power for decisive action. His disillusionment – a lament over his condition of enslavement – comes too late. The petals have already fallen, and the stem, shrunken and frail, will no longer produce a single flower. With the sword of discrimination, sever the stem! Fling the petals joyously on winds of inner freedom. This release from attachment to the moment will render you immune to life's unceasing change. Release from attachment to life's changes will render you immune to death itself, life's greatest change. Inner freedom will make you immortal.

The worldly hope men set their hearts upon turns ashes – or it prospers; and anon, like snow upon the desert's dusty face lighting a little hour or two – is gone. (...) Worldly hope is deceiving – a will-o'-the-wisp that lures ignorant minds to their destruction. (...) The wise understand life's fleeting nature. They waste no time in building dream-castles of futile expectations. Instead, they cultivate non-attachment to this earth's experiences. When death comes, they find the perfection of fulfillment in God. This stanza also has an outward application. For Omar here emphasizes the importance, in daily life, of even-mindedness. If you aspire to wisdom and unalloyed happiness, keep the feelings of your heart free. Don't over-react to life's ups and downs. (...) Toil and struggle are the norms of life on earth. They are blessings, not a misfortune, for they provide us with a testing ground for our own inner development. As we hone our peace of mind – its pure metal forged in meditation – on the abrasive surface of outer difficulties, we develop the clear discrimination with which to slice through to delusion's heart. Eventually, we arrive at that blessed state where the very luster of our peace protects us during all our activities. The most important condition for lasting happiness is even-mindedness. Let the screaming hordes of worry surround the ramparts of your inner peace; and let triumphant cries of success invite you to a victory dance when things go well: Remain ever calmly centered in the Self, within. As a child's sand castle disintegrates before invading waves, so does a restless mind, lacking strength of will and perseverance, succumb to the pounding it receives from the waves of changing circumstance. A diamond, however, retains its strength and clarity no matter how many waves crash down upon it. The man of inner peace, similarly, his consciousness made crystalline by inner calmness, retains his equanimity through even the storms of mighty trials. (...) Always remain in the Self. Come down when necessary, to eat or talk a little bit, then withdraw into the Self again. Even-mindedness comes naturally, when one is not inwardly identified with outer events.

Why devote your whole life to the distractions of a passing spectacle? Abide steadfastly at your own center, in the indestructible peace that comes from daily meditation.

The only worthwhile accomplishments are not those we achieve outwardly, but the victories we win over ourselves.

In deep meditation, understanding is given us: It is from soul-consciousness that all true inspiration comes for mankind's material, mental, and spiritual improvement.

Our subtlest perceptions spring not from outside ourselves, in communication with the world around us and with other minds, but from hidden recesses within ourselves. Approach these spinal grottoes sensitively, for through them flows the subtle river of all vitality, perceptivity and joy. On the banks of this astral river grow fresh, rejuvenating herbs, verdant grasses of inspiration, and fragrant wildflowers of intuition. All living forms are sustained by the life-force at their center. Vertebrate forms are fed and revitalized by the life in their spines. Through the spinal nerve centers, in the case of human beings, inspiration, also, flows outward. Deepen your awareness of this spinal channel, for within your body – so apparently small, outwardly – flows the mighty, all-nourishing river of life. (...) Too much attraction to the senses becomes sense addiction, enslaving us to outward consciousness. (...) At the inner end of the nervous system, the mind, interiorized, communes with the soul. The deeper this soul-communion, the better the mind in turn can communicate peace to the entire body.

Wisdom is the fruit of personal experience. Solutions to the mystery of life and death must be received in direct contact with the Infinite. (...) People must work their way to truth by exercising their own powers of discrimination.

All life is fleeting. Cling to that understanding, and seek, then, within yourself that which alone endures. (...) The Spirit, though invisible to human sight, is everlasting. Its visible manifestations in the objective world make a pretense of permanence, but change constantly. (...) Like waves on the ocean, they are mere appearances, and not reality itself. The ocean of Spirit alone endures.

Most human beings refuse to be guided from within, by higher wisdom. Instead, they live influenced by the deeply entrenched habits they created in the past. Their lives, in consequence, are like balls struck at the player's whim. As the ball in a game must go where it is sent, so mankind, habit-driven, has no choice but to live out the results of *karma* as dictated by former actions. Most human beings are slaves to their conditioning, which may appear an outward cause but in fact has its origin within themselves. They are controlled by their habits. Although those habits were created, initially, by themselves, a habit, once formed, is self-perpetuating. (...) The more we live guided from within, the greater our control over outer events in the great game of life. For when we live at our own center, in superconsciousness, we live in the only true freedom there is. In soul-consciousness we are no longer helplessly controlled by habits and desires. To the extent, then, that we develop soul-consciousness, we free ourselves from karmic slavery. Instead of accepting fatalistically the decrees of *karma*, follow the inner way to freedom. Meditate daily. Commune deeply with God. Learn from Him, through the silent voice of intuition, the way out of soul-degrading serfdom of habits.

Life is cosmically interwoven. The atoms of one body serve again and again to create other living forms. The components of your present body may have existed in some star or planet or a previous universe, long before the creation of this present universe. Physically, by the very act of breathing, we constantly exchange with other life forms the elements of which our present bodies are composed. Mentally also, life is interwoven. The thoughts we think, the feelings and desires we harbor, are vibrations that affect, and are affected by, those of countless other people. No fleeting thought truly belongs to us. It may be produced, or influenced, by outside causes. In any case, it is rooted in its own natural soil of consciousness, of which it is no more than a manifestation. Our thoughts are determined by the level of consciousness on which we live. In mankind, these levels of consciousness are centered in the *chakras* of the spine. According to the level of a person's consciousness, his thoughts will be mundane or spiritual, or some gradation in between. The more his consciousness is confined to the lower *chakras*, the more his nature will manifest such qualities as lust, avarice, or violence. The more he lives in the upper *chakras*, the more will it be natural for him to express expansive love, peace and harmony. The more a person's energy and consciousness are centered in the lower spine, the more this material world will attract him. The more they are centered in the upper spine, the more his thoughts and feelings will incline toward God. Ultimately, all thoughts, feelings and desires are rooted in the structure of the universe, the essence of which is consciousness. Life itself is but a shadow of the Spirit, cast by the Divine Light as it shines through vibrations of energy. As the Spirit is eternal, so is its shadow, the created universe. And so also is our own participation in the great scheme of things, until our souls merge back into the eternal Spirit.

Many temples of worship are masterpieces of grace and beauty, their lines reminders in majestic stone of the formless wonders of God. No symbol, however, can replace the Reality it represents. God must be experienced in the soul. It is not enough to stand in awe of the divine wonders we behold portrayed in stone, or hear described in Scripture. Even one contact with God in meditation fills the soul with bliss and wisdom far beyond the pallid hope tendered by priests through ritual and learned discourse. Religion that encloses truth in a superfluity of outward forms imprisons the soul, whose nature is to expand outward to infinity. If devotion is focused narrowly on the superficial aspects of religion, it becomes fanaticism. If a man's native power of reasoning is constricted by too many dogmas, he ends up bigoted and intellectually confused. The natural trend of outward religion is toward such constriction, which results in spiritual disillusionment. Intuition alone conveys the calm certainty of wisdom. It is meaningless to debate lengthily the best ways of living one's religion outwardly: whether by serving God through one's fellowman, or by renouncing worldly involvement altogether. The essential thing is to be always conscious of the Divine Presence within. The true seeker will draw every thought, every inspiration from that blissful inner fountain. (...) Humbly let us seek Him in the silence. And during our daily activities, let us hold His hand in loving recollection.

Man, in his soul, is not predestined to be either good or bad. While vice or virtue may seem inborn, every human tendency is self-acquired, either in this life or in former lives. It is the result of individual choices. (...) Every circumstance in our lives, every characteristic, every habit, however much repudiated by us now, was something we ourselves created, recently or in the distant past. Each one is due to our misuse of the free choice that God first bestowed on us. He gave us the freedom to return to Him, if we so determined, or to allow our lives to flow out futilely toward sense-indulgences. From Him, the only source of life, all strength and goodness flow. If our life-force flows outward continually, estranging itself from its divine source within, it enters an arid desert. In barren sands of matter-consciousness, its streams become absorbed, and disappear. Blame no one for the evils that beset you. Accept responsibility for your own life, and for whatever misfortunes you encounter. Do your best, with firm resolution, to eliminate the harmful tendencies in your own nature. Above all, go back to God. Only by perfect self-honesty and dynamic self-effort will you eliminate forever the influence of satanic delusion in your life. Remember, it was you who invited that influence, by your own thoughts and actions. Live from today onward guided by divine wisdom from within.

Man must accept responsibility for the fact that he yielded to temptation in the first place. Only by taking the blame squarely on his own shoulders can he hope to change for the better. (...) Man must courageously accept responsibility for his own downfall. Self-pity would only set the seal on his destruction. At the same time, too stern an attitude, if not offset by the sweetness of love, would alienate man from God. And what is God if not Love itself? It is important to understand that man's state, when viewed impersonally, is not only blame-worthy; it is also deserving of compassion. God, in His divine love, yearns to help His human children, subject to such numerous temptations. Man receives – during his youth especially – all too few warnings against them from the side of wisdom. It would not show compassion, however, but debilitating pity, for God to deprive mankind of the opportunity to grow. For spiritual development, inner strength is necessary. Without it, we would never deserve the Kingdom of God, nor have the strength of will and the clarity of wisdom to enter it.

To the sincere seeker, opinions concerning the Infinite are irrelevant. Can a person living in a room of mirrors see anything beyond its reflections? 'Pish!' says wisdom to the nonsense with which the ego-self, self-enclosed in its spiritual ignorance, so often prattles the divine truths.

Man's very power to breathe, move, and think comes from deep within himself, not from without. In his body, power descends from above, from soul levels; it doesn't rise from below, in his base, animal nature. The unenlightened man sees himself mirrored back to him from without. Life and enthusiasm, he believes, come to him from his surroundings, from other people, from exciting events and experiences. The energy that he receives from them, however, is energy he first gave out to them, through his fond expectations of them. He may imagine that an evening on the town will make him happy. If the evening meets his expectations, he will attribute his subsequent happiness to that experience. All that really happened, however, was that a thought and a flow of energy were projected

outward, and were mirrored back again. Other people, had they not projected a similar thought and flow of energy, might have derived no pleasure from the evening's outing at all. The events of the evening, moreover, would have nourished that person's sense of happiness only to the extent that there was sufficient energy in himself to respond to it. Even food nourishes our bodies only to the extent that our life-force is strong enough to digest it. The life-force does not depend for its existence on outer nourishment. Energy is the *source* of matter; it is not the consequence of atoms forming in the proper combinations.

As a man allows himself to depend increasingly on circumstances outside himself for his physical, mental, and spiritual nourishment, never looking within to his own source, he gradually depletes his reserves of energy. Thus he finds eventually, that sense-stimuli no longer stimulate him; that his food is no longer easily digested; his former pleasures cease to give him pleasure; and good times, as he once defined them, stretch his heart's feelings on a rack of anguish and ennui. Dry as dust he comes at last, shriveled in body and mind. Death comes to save him – at the eleventh hour! – from spiritual mummification. He is returned forcibly to the inner source of existence – there, in the astral world, to prepare himself for a fresh try on earth. The ordinary man considers himself, again, the product of mere conditioning by hereditary traits, family and social traditions, deep subconscious tendencies, and by the long upward struggle of evolution. To his way of thinking, he is more acted upon than acting: the hammered-out product of circumstances rather than their creator. In these thoughts, too, he errs. No hereditary or other influence could affect him, were he not conscious already. And it is his soul, not his body, that gives him consciousness – say, rather, that is his true consciousness. As long as he lives centered in his ego, he remains deaf to the song of the nightingale which calls to him inwardly from its perch on the tree of Life. He feels driven to action by his egoic needs: by physical hunger, and by the urge to compete, to outshine his peers, to survive.

As a result of countless outward causes, including numberless dark failures and bitter disappointments, his heart gradually becomes hardened. When first he perceives in his soul the enormity of what he has lost, he feels daunted, though at the same time challenged, by the task that awaits him. It is no easy task, certainly, to loosen the octopus-grip on the subconscious that is exerted by countless incarnations of bad habits. At the same time, he feels encouraged to realize that joy and wisdom – which he pursued so long, so foolishly in trackless deserts! – can truly be his at last. The sincere seeker, in contrast to the armchair seeker who wastes his life spinning intellectual theories, takes heart at the thought of the hard work before him. A true warrior, though afraid, plunges courageously into battle when the strength of his arm is needed. A true alpinist, though apprehensive of the sheer cliff he faces, sets out resolutely to conquer it. And the sincere truth-seeker tells himself, 'I know what an arduous task it must be to achieve perfection, but I will give it all I have. With God's help, success surely, must be mine!' By deep, daily efforts in meditation, he conquers flesh-consciousness at last, and regains his long-lost awareness of the divine bliss within.

By introspection, I find it sadly true that I, like many others, deified the desire for names, fame, and worldly enjoyment. I thereby lost the esteem of wise men, and cowered before my own self-convicting conscience. Like so many, I drowned my soul's honor, founded on divine discrimination, in a shallow cup of sense-pleasures. Foolishly I bartered my soul's wisdom, held widely in high repute, for a drunken – and only briefly rousing! – ballad. (...) The worldly person's sense of honor rests shakily on the good opinion of others, most of whom are as deluded as himself. Omar Khayyam contrasts this false pride with soul honor, the innate dignity of which demands no approval by the masses. True honor depends on right understanding and on a clear conscience. Seldom does it receive mob endorsement. But it wins applause from men and women of true insight. Omar urges everyone to see that firmness in truth is honor, truly. Wise and honorable is he who keeps his sword of discrimination sharp and shining, who actively combats the invader, sense-temptation, and who makes his home within the protecting walls of his castle of inner peace.

Those who would guard themselves against the subtle lures of temptation must work diligently to replace their evil habits with wholesome, God-reminding ones. Never relax your vigilance. Never permit yourself to sink into a false sense of security. O devotee! be introspective, ever watchful, ready in a moment to banish the tramp, temptation, if he tries to enter the polished sanctuary of your self-control. Remember, you will not be safe from delusion until you have transcended ego-consciousness altogether, in soul-union with God.

By quaffing regularly the divine wine of soul-inspiration, I have discredited the pleasures of the senses. My development in spiritual consciousness has cost me the respect of erstwhile, sense-addicted, pleasure-addled friends. (...) If we pursue the spiritual path seriously, we may find ourselves objects of ridicule to our worldly-minded, erstwhile friends and acquaintances. But the prestige they would offer us is valueless and self-destructive. Alas, some devotees foolishly regret sacrificing that prestige. Succumbing to the importunities of family members and of self-seeking friends, they return to the welcome which ignorance gladly extends to kindred ignorance. Shamed to cowardice by their sneering, imperceptive critics, they abandon their quest for God, and, hoping for the world's applause, embrace once again the fears and tremulous expectations of a life lived in delusion! If a person sells true value for false, what can he buy to replace even a fraction of the worth he sacrificed? A million dollars in play money will not buy the equivalent of one gold coin. Devotees who, having once tasted the perfect wine of the soul, renounce it for the flat beer of worldly existence quickly realize what a bad choice they've made. They've exchanged the sweetness of inner peace for coarse, bar room jollity, and thereby condemned themselves to a life of spiritual anguish and despair. (...) No matter that you have grown self-enclosed in your delusion. If you resolve firmly to try and try again, God Himself and His angels will come to your aid. Given sufficient time, and given renewed courage on your part, you cannot fail to recover what was lost.

Misunderstanding people may pity those who renounce normal, human desires and turn their backs on worldly ambition. To spurn these goals, however, is only to invest in a greater future. The Celestial Nightingale comes to us in meditation, and thrills our souls with melodious songs of cosmic wisdom. Its liquid notes fill the nerve channels of our brains. Ultimately – supreme fulfillment! – our consciousness expands with Cosmic Sound into the omnipresence of Spirit. To seek God requires a bold and adventurous spirit. Anyone who, instead, clings timidly to trivial worldly advantages and to dimly glowing earthly delights is both short-sighted and a coward. O devotee, be brave! Fear not to invest your last coin to discover the fabled resources of your soul. (...) In life, no significant achievement is ever made except by those who are willing to forego popular approval in their quest for goals which their hearts tell them are right and true.

The Columbia professor had a probing mind. Among many questions, he asked, 'How do you distinguish between yourself and your followers?' 'All are waves on the same, one ocean', the Master replied, 'composed, as ocean water is, of the same substance: Spirit. Some of the waves are higher than others. Some waves don't even want to distance themselves from the ocean. All waves, no matter how high, are in essence one and the same. The difference between the guru and the disciples, then, lies only in their respective closeness to the ocean: in how conscious each one is of his essential reality. The greater the sense of ego, the taller the wave, and the greater, in consequence, the ignorance. The greater one's awareness of the ocean as one's sole reality, the smaller the wave, and also the less his sense of having a separate individuality'. Professor: 'Is there a difference, then, of evolution?' The Master: 'That much is true, if we understand evolution to mean a progressive refinement of awareness. The tall waves participate more exuberantly in the play of delusion. The little waves, which are more enlightened, are no longer excited by the play. Enlightened beings enjoy everything, not for itself, but as a play of God's.' Professor: 'Is there any end to evolution?' The Master replied, 'No end. You go on until you achieve endlessness.'

Man was given ego-consciousness to inspire him to seek God. That is the only reason for his existence. Job, friends, personal interests – these things, by themselves, mean nothing.

Who is getting better? – The Master's tone was impersonal. – (...) It is wisest to be impartial. If you have health, but you are attached to it, you will always be afraid of losing it. And if you fear that loss, but become ill, you will suffer. Why not remain forever joyful in the Self? Man's greatest problem is his ego – his consciousness of individuality. Whatever happens to him, he thinks it affects him, personally. Why be affected? You are not this body – you are He! Everything is He; all is Spirit. (...) For the show to go on, there has to be activity, interest. It all has to seem real. Hence this appearance of individuality. As long as man enjoys the play for its own sake, he will go on birth after birth, experiencing life's pleasures and pains. The Bhagavad Gita describes it as a wheel constantly turning. To get off the wheel, you have to desire freedom very intensely. Then only will God release you. Your longing has to be fervent. If it is, and if you are determined no more to want to play, the Lord has to release you. He tries to keep you here with tests, but in His higher aspect, as the Cosmic Lover, He hates this

show, and wants you out of it. Why shouldn't He release you, once He sees that you really want Him alone, and not His show; that you want only freedom in Him? (...) And try, meanwhile, to rise above the pairs of opposites: pleasure and pain, heat and cold, sickness and health. Free yourself from the consciousness of individuality, of being separate from everyone and everything else. Keep your mind fixed steadfastly on Him. Remain inwardly as unaffected as the motionless Spirit you want to become. He alone is what you really are. His bliss alone is your true nature.

Keep your distance, and they will always respect you.

If a lower duty conflicts with a higher one, it ceases to be a duty.

I saw this young man laughing superficially with some of the other men one day. Later I told him, 'This is the first time you have cut off my vibrations by your lightness'. I wanted to see him become stronger in himself.

The sense of being a separate, egoic self begins with the astral, not with the physical body. The soul is individualized Spirit. It comes into separate existence with the causal body, when the universal I first conceives this particular expression of itself. The soul then energizes that expression, clothing it first in an astral body of light. When, further, it assumes a physical body, its appearance of individuality becomes – though still only in appearance – fixed and permanent. People who think to merge into the Infinite by committing suicide only break their outer shell temporarily. They are still locked in the ego, which is implanted in the astral body and is the source of all their troubles. They must return, ego-bound, to the material plane, burdened additionally with their karmic sin. Self-murder is a greater sin even than murder, for it springs from a desire to destroy not only another person's right to live, but life itself. One can never succeed in this attempt. Life is God, and God is life.

True faith comes only from actual spiritual experience. It cannot be presumed.

The truth is, nothing is really created anyway. The Spirit simply manifests the universe. Ultimately, nothing causes anything, for nothing, in actuality, is even happening.

Devotion must be internalized. When it is allowed to flow outward, it becomes emotion. Emotional devotion, by its very exuberance, takes one further into delusion. Excitement only extinguishes the lamp of pure love.

In meditation, you must go beyond thought. As long as you are busy thinking, you are in your rational mind, on the conscious plane. When you sleep and dream, you are on the subconscious plane, and in your astral body. And when your mind is fully withdrawn in superconsciousness, it becomes centered in the bliss of the spine. You are then in your ideational, or causal body. That is the level of the soul.

The minds of most human beings are like the sky on a partly cloudy day. The mental clouds may part for a time, and let in the sunlight of clarity, but unless those people deliberately seek out the bright spots and bask in their warmth, the clouds close in again, and hide behind mists of worldly *karma* the sunlight of clarity.

Never be attached to the passing scenes of life.

If the devotee suppresses his nature, instead of trying to expand it, he diminishes himself as a human being, with no corresponding increase of spiritual awareness. (...) For the goal of the spiritual path is self-transcendence, not self-suppression.

No one escapes persecution, for God wants to be sure of his devotee. One has to be willing to suffer opposition for choosing the spiritual path over the ways of the world.

Desires are the greatest obstacles on the spiritual path. I see it as a war, with people fighting to achieve victory. Some are killed by bullets of desire, and must be reborn to renew the struggle. Others, after great difficulties, win through to victory, and have no need to return to this material plane. (...) Desires come, of course, in differing degrees of intensity. All of them, the Master said, must eventually be fulfilled.

You are a master when you can use your senses, but they don't use you.

What is the use, anyway, of keeping the physical body indefinitely? Even were it to remain in perfect and glowing condition, the body – or, rather, the very ego that constructed it – is a prison! You aren't this body. You aren't this ego. You are the immortal soul. In superconsciousness alone does immortality exist.

Many people of New Thought persuasion place exaggerated emphasis on manifesting health, wealth, and other symptoms of material success, which they see as outward demonstrations of high spiritual development. The Master's attitude toward these things was qualified. On the one hand, he considered that seeking such things for themselves could demand more energy than they are worth. (...) For the devotee of God it is, he felt, a waste of energy to strive too assiduously for outer perfection, which is ever and cannot be but evanescent. He counseled people, 'Do what you can, within reason, to remain healthy and to achieve the worldly success you need, but remember, it is better to rise above outer conditions altogether, so that they cannot affect you.' He accepted that, since people live on many different levels of awareness, no one teaching in this respect can, or even should, be applied to everyone. 'Illness', he said, 'can be a serious obstacle on the spiritual path. So also can poverty. Do your best – again', he repeated, 'within reason – to achieve health and prosperity, and to succeed at whatever you set your mind to do. On the other hand, keep those efforts proportionate to the true long-range goal of life, which is to find God. To devote all your energy to fulfilling your material desires, as so many people do even in

the name of spirituality, distorts their values, for it deprives them of the time they need for more important things.'

'We must strike a balance', the Master said, 'between non-attachment to outer things and sensible concern for our present realities. So long as a person is centered in body-consciousness, he must take sensible care of his body. It is important spiritually, also, to take reasonable physical precautions. Proper diet, proper exercise, fresh air and sunlight: These things are necessary for a well-rounded existence. (...) Keep exercised and body fit for God-realization.' The Master scoffed, however, at excessive preoccupation with one's own health.

[Regarding severe austerities:] Only those with some measure of realization can safely afford to risk their health and physical well-being in seeking Him. Without realization, such practices make one fanatical.

All teachings are the same, but if you keep reading everything, you will get confused. You have to realize the Truth behind those teachings. Only then will you know from realization that they are the same. Until that time, however, it will be like trying to cross a river in two boats, one foot in each of them. When the boats separate, you will fall between them and drown. Some differences do exist between the various teachings. With wisdom, they can be resolved. To the unenlightened mind, however, though they are superficial, they can be a cause of confusion.

I once asked him, 'Sir, if the thing that keeps us bound to this world is worldly desires, why don't those who commit suicide become liberated? Obviously, considering the extreme measures they've adopted to escape this world, they have no desire to remain in it.' The Master chuckled as he contemplated this seeming paradox. 'But there must also', he replied, 'be a positive desire for God.'

It isn't only a matter of when you come onto the path. Above all, it is a question of how much energy you devote, once you actually set foot onto it. As Jesus said, 'The last shall be first, and many that came first shall be last'.

I remember a young pair who attended a class series I gave in Phoenix, Arizona. They were the most beautiful couple I have ever seen; that is saying a lot! (...) 'Everybody in the class', I said, 'envies your love. I don't envy you, for the love in my heart is a hundred times greater than what I see expressed in your eyes. I'd like to see you develop toward the experience of ever deeper, divine love. In a year's time, I plan to return to Phoenix. I would like to see if your love is still as strong then as it is now.' I did come back the next year, and tried to look them up. It wasn't easy, but I managed at last to locate the boy. He was working in a store. When he saw me, he came out with me to the car and stood beside me. He looked worn out. It saddened me to see him like that. His back was bent instead of straight like a *yogi's*. In a weak voice he said: 'I still believe in God.' 'What is the matter with you?' I cried. 'I expected to find you communing with God daily!' He answered, 'I'm working so hard, I hardly have time for anything else.' He took me to his home. They'd had a child, and his wife was expecting another one. I said, 'I miss the luster that I used to see in your eyes.' I felt sorry for them, and gave

them a mental and spiritual shaking. As I was leaving, I saw in their eyes again a glimmer of their former love and happiness. They promised me to start meditating again. But just see how easy it is to let the world creep in and steal your happiness. Tread the spiritual path very carefully. Delusion awaits you around every corner, hoping to seize you.

Interestingly, the Master did have one or two little hobbies. It was as if to hold his interest in this world. Teaching and writing took him to a higher, more abstract consciousness, and left him with the need to ground himself in something more mundane. I've learned that this is, in fact, a common feature in the lives of many people whose activities are largely mental or, above all, spiritual.

Just as it takes effort for most people to rise above body-consciousness, so it takes a master an effort of will to bring his mind down to the body.

He was a flawless mirror. Constantly he reflected back to people what they were. (...) What he reflected back was the reactions of their own higher Self to anything they were feeling. No one could fool him. Before his calm gaze, a person's inner life was stripped bare. Some people, for that very reason, feared to be around him.

If one marries out of necessity, he will have to reincarnate to reach the point where he wants to live only for God.

Be careful always to hold positive expectations, for you will attract to yourself anything that you project into the universe.

I consider everything evil that keeps one away from God. I don't mean that marriage itself is an evil; if it helps the spiritual seeker, it is a good thing. But if it takes one away from God, it is evil. Evil is the absence of true joy.

Evil is delusion. It is the veil over the bliss-nature of the soul. (...) The choice before the spiritual aspirant must be taken very seriously. (...) It is quite simply a choice between joy and suffering. The choices offered by the world are not so extreme. People in delusion face varying degrees of fulfillment and pain. They find themselves happier, for example, when they serve others than when they seize everything they can for themselves. The choice, however, between seeking God or turning away from Him is absolute. Not to seek Him, or, worse still, to turn away from Him or against Him, is to opt blatantly for delusion. This is, whether or not one realizes it, a choice for evil.

Moods are caused by past overindulgence in sense pleasures. They are the consequence of over-satiety and disgust. Don't give in to them. If you indulge in moods, they will reawaken your past desire for their opposite pleasures. Thus, they will pull you down into delusion again. (...) It is like a pendulum, swinging unceasingly back and forth between opposite states of awareness. The farther the pendulum swings in one direction, the farther it must swing back in the

other. Indulgence in moods returns a person, with or without his consent, to their opposite pleasures.

When you work for God, not self, that is just as good as meditation. Then work helps your meditation, and meditation helps your work. You need the balance. With only meditation, one becomes lazy, and the senses become strong. With only work, the mind becomes restless, and one forgets God.

Habits can be changed in a day. They are nothing but concentration of the mind. You've been concentrating one way: Simply concentrate another way, and you'll completely overcome the habit.

Never forget this: Evil has power. If one sides with it, he will find himself imprisoned by it. (...) It isn't the fact of being married or living a normal life in the world that pulls one down. It is that one who is lukewarm in his devotion, and chooses the world, has made a choice that will pull him down. As the Master put it, 'It isn't where your body is that determines how spiritual you are: it's where you are in consciousness'. I have noticed over years that the first thing most renunciates do who leave their monastic calling is get married. What that almost invariably means is voluntary reinvestment in self-interest, with the endless desires and attachments that such interest entails.

That is what one should do here: Do not concentrate on the negative side. When you look at that side long enough, you take on its qualities. But when you look at the good, you take on goodness.

Don't mix with people too closely. The desire for outward companionship is a reflection of the soul's desire for companionship with God. The more you seek to satisfy that desire outwardly, however, the more you will lose His inner company, and the more restless and dissatisfied, in consequence, you will become.

I never call people my disciples. God is the Guru. They are His disciples.

In God, everything goes on in the present tense. It is like a movie, which can be turned backwards or forwards. The action on the screen may cover centuries, but all the while up in the projection booth, it happens now. The secret of life is to learn to live fully aware of present bliss. When you can learn to be happy in the present, you have God. Very few live in the present. Most people live in the past, with nostalgia or regrets, or in the future, with hopes and fears born of desire.

Living with the Master made it natural for us to see life as a continuum, and the present life as only temporary. Eternity became more easily, for us, a daily reality.

In loving people you might get attached to them. What you must do, where others are concerned, is love God first, and then love Him through them.

It took me years to understand that the Master viewed the organization itself as only a means to a higher, individual consciousness. Otherwise, the organization as such had no meaning for him. He used to say, firmly and with sincerity, 'I could walk away from this work right now, and never look back.'

The Master said that his mission was to show the essence of all religions. (...) His mission was to show the essential oneness of Truth itself. It is at their deepest level that all religions are one. For this purpose, it sufficed to show the oneness of only two of the great world religions. (...) 'Self-realization', the Master predicted, 'will someday be recognized as the essential truth of every religion in the world.'

Good, better, and best are determined by the depth of one's love for God. Outside of divine devotion, nothing else matters. If one is in a position to leave everything and live only for God, why not do so outwardly also? Whether married or single, the important thing is to love Him deeply. The monastic life is for those who have the pure desire to live only for God, and who are also free of social entanglements.

The Master welcomed the discoveries of modern science. He pointed out, however, that science cannot really invent anything. Nor can artists really create anything. 'All that man can do', he said, 'is rearrange what is there already'. The arts and sciences, like man himself, are not important in the great scheme of things except as they help to unfold the divine plan for the universe. Humility before God is the beginning of true understanding. And, as he said also, 'Pride is the death of wisdom'.

Evolution is only a suggestion in the mind. Everything, in reality, is going on in the present tense. In God's consciousness there is no evolution, no change, no progress. It is always and everywhere the same one Reality.

The Master shook his head. 'You are trying too hard', he said. 'You are using too much will power. It becomes nervous. Just be natural. As long as you try hard to meditate, you will not succeed – just as, if you try hard to fall asleep, you won't be able to do it. Will power should be applied gradually; otherwise it can be detrimental. That's why it is good in the beginning to emphasize relaxation.'

'Humility comes from seeing God, not yourself, as the Doer. When you see Him acting through you, how can you be proud of anything you do? I could sit here all day singing my own praises: It would mean nothing to me. I would know that I was giving praises only to God. Humility lies in the heart; it is not a put-up job. You must feel that everything you do is accomplished by Him alone, through you.' An interesting memory of my experience with the Master was that I never saw in his eyes even a flicker of egoic self-awareness. The Self of which he was unceasingly aware was the Divine within him: selfhood expanded to Infinity. A comment we heard frequently from him acquires special meaning from the foregoing observation: 'I killed Yogananda long ago. No one dwells in this temple now but God.'

The body is only a plate. Eat the feast of Spirit from it, while you still have the body. After that, what happens to the plate no longer matters.

I don't ask people to suppress their own will. Those who do what I say, however, find an increase, not a decrease, in their freedom, for what I show them is God's will. Freedom comes from tuning your will to the dictates of wisdom.

It is helpful to think of God as being forever with us: right here and right now, ever in the present tense. Ask yourself, at the same time, why are people so irresistibly drawn to living for, rather than in the moment? In other words, to identify with the fleeting scenes and ever-fluctuating circumstances around them: changing events, endless streams of people, both enemies and friends. Unfortunately, it takes time to banish the mental hypnosis that all this, and that time itself, is a reality, focusing one on the desire for ephemeral sense-experiences.

It takes very, very, very good *karma* even to want God. How easy it is for even one desire, once fulfilled, to lead to others! They come in an unending procession, and tempt man to seek his fulfillment outwardly through the senses. One may wander as long as he elects to do so.

I've learned my lesson. I see that, in every fulfillment, there is a catch. From now on, whether I'm rich or poor, healthy or unhealthy, married or single, whether here on this earth or in the astral plane, I want only my divine Beloved. Wherever God is, there alone lies perfection.

There has to be a villain, so we learn to love the hero. (...) It's all a dream. (...) Good *karma* makes you want, in time, to wake up from the dream. Bad *karma*, on the other hand, darkens the mind and keeps it bound to the dreaming process.

The Master was extraordinarily sensitive to people's actual motives, and would never play along with any pretense on their part. A mere show of noble or lofty attitudes – foreign to a person's actual nature – he dismissed, knowing that it only covered up less noble feelings.

Do not dry the ocean of my love with the fires of my desires.

It is not easy to be spiritual, but it is very easy if you will only follow a few rules. Begin by simplifying your life. Then, remain somewhat apart from others. If you want to find God, don't mix too much socially. I myself mix with others very little. When I am alone, I remain centered in the Self. Seclusion, I often say to people, is the price of greatness.

There are so many things here in America that I wanted for my own impoverished country. In time, however, I found that the people here are not so happy, on average, as the peasants in India – many of whom cannot afford more than one meal a day. Despite the material prosperity here, people haven't the same inner happiness. Americans are satiated with a plethora of sense pleasures.

Happiness eludes them for the simple reason that they seek it everywhere except in themselves.

It is God alone who acts through you, plays all the roles, directs all the action. It is Him alone you should really love – through others, when you love them.

All of the branches of *yoga* are basically the same. They take the seeker by different paths, but their goal is the same: Self-realization. Most of the *yoga* branches, however, are based on different human temperaments, which may be primarily devotional, rational, or active. What we teach here is called *Raja Yoga*, the *royal yoga*; it is so called because it is central to all of them, and is primarily concerned with what they are all meant to achieve, though they go less directly. The inner silence of communion is, in fact, the goal of every path of *yoga*. The others attain that goal less directly. We, in teaching *Raja Yoga*, don't ignore those other practices. We take a little bit from each of them, according to people's different temperaments, and show people how to direct their understanding toward that highest purpose: the stillness of inner communion. The goal of *Bhakti Yoga* (the path of devotion) is not to keep on singing to God. Every great *bhakti*, or devotee of God, has entered at last a state of silent communion with Him, where his devotion flows toward Him inwardly. All the great *karmis* – those who served God according to the principles of *Karma Yoga* (the path of selfless service) – have reached the point where they realized that the supreme service is to direct all one's energy inwardly, in silence, to God. And all the great *gyanis*, who follow the path of discrimination and wisdom, have realized at last that it isn't, in the end, by thinking that one achieves wisdom – that wisdom can only be received, in inner stillness. Thus all paths of *yoga* lead eventually, like tributary rivers, into the one, all-uniting river of *Raja Yoga*.

Discrimination is necessary and doesn't come by reasoning only, but by soul-intuition. Reason can help one to understand the how of things – that is, how they work, how they occur. It cannot, however, show one the subtle interrelationships between things. Nor can it, in a deeper way, show the why of things. Discrimination is an individual exercise. It is the wave aware that it is dancing on the ocean of Spirit. Wisdom comes with deepening one's perception of the Absolute. The understanding that is wisdom is universal.

Yogananda didn't see his work in terms of conversion. He saw it in terms of raising people's consciousness.

Behind every rosebush of pleasure lies the rattlesnake of suffering, coiled and ready to strike. Be ever attentive not to be bitten, as can happen if you allow yourself to become attracted to anything that merely fans your infatuation.

Extend help to those who are weak. But if you yourself are weak, remember, it is the greatest sin to spread that infection by making others weak.

God cannot escape if you catch Him in the net of divine meditation and divine service. One of these without the other, however, is spiritually dangerous. You need the balance.

Anything that causes a diminution of consciousness is not good. If the will is placed even temporarily under the control of another, it can become weakened.

When working one should work also with the thought of God. Otherwise he may earn good *karma*, but he won't come closer to Him. (...) Churches that don't emphasize devotion and inner communion, by meditation, are social institutions, not houses of God. The church should be a spiritual oasis in the desert of mundane consciousness. It should be an active beehive, busy producing the honey of God's love.

Make your heart a hermitage.

A person's sanctity is entirely a matter between him and God. Always, it is a question of inner consciousness.

It is very difficult to find a right balance between work and meditation. You will achieve a good balance, however, if you work in the thought of God during the day, and meditate on Him deeply at night.

You won't find God by making constant excuses: for example, saying, 'When I find a quiet place, I will meditate'. That is not at all the way to get there. If you tell yourself, however, 'Right now I will plunge into deep meditation', you can be there in a moment. When you are really sleepy, you have no difficulty in sleeping no matter where you are. When a person is in love, he finds no difficulty in thinking of his beloved; rather, it is difficult not to think of her, even to the point of ignoring his work. Be in love with God. It is easy to meditate deeply, when your love for Him is deep enough.

I never do anything with personal motivation. I don't do things because I want to. If people ask me, 'Why are you doing this or that?', I say, 'Who is doing it? I am only carrying out His will. I have no personal concern.' Yogananda doesn't interest me anymore. I want only to carry out His will.

Keep your mind always engaged in serving God. Whether meditating or serving Him through others. An idle mind is the workshop of the Devil.

There are not two absolute causes in the universe. Satan is a part of God's drama. He is necessary to it, as the villain is necessary in a stage play. Evil is the veil that conceals God, the magnet that tries to draw the mind away from Him. Good is that which helps to make God's hidden reality manifest: like the breeze, blowing away the smoke that hides a fire. Within the realm of duality, however, both good and evil exist. God, the Supreme Spirit, is beyond them both. Being omniscient, He knows them both equally – the evil as much as the good. Goodness, however, reveals more clearly to the mind the existence of bliss, which, since it is above reality, may be described as goodness absolute. The satanic force, on the other hand, being conscious, tries deliberately to hide from man's gaze that ever-blazing light of divine bliss.

If you criticize others judgmentally, rather than simply commenting on their behavior impartially, that shows that you have their faults to work on in yourself. By criticizing others, moreover, you increase those faults in yourself. What you condemn in others, you will have to experience, someday, yourself. That is *karmic law*. In that way, people are taught compassion.

A spiritual disease worse even than love and ignorance is indifference. Linked to it is the habit of distracting the mind. As soon as you find yourself with a little leisure on your hands, you pick up a magazine, or turn on the radio. Such things can be poison. Anything that relaxes your vigilance is a threat to your spiritual life.

If the sexual impulse were taken away from you, you would realize that you had lost your greatest friend. You would lose all interest in life. Sex was given to you to make you strong. The more you give in to it, the weaker you become. But when you master it, you'll find that you've become a lion of happiness.

Above everything else, be loyal to God. Devote more time to seeking Him. And be less concerned over lesser duties which, someday, won't exist anymore anyway. In those lesser preoccupations lies the greatest delusion. Never look upon them as, in themselves, important. Nothing is so pressingly important as your daily trust with God.

Faith comes with direct, personal experience. That is what Saint Paul meant when he said, 'Faith is the proof of things unseen'. The deeper your experience of Truth, the greater faith you will have.

The greatest sin is to call yourself a sinner. You are a child of God. Though gold be covered with mud for centuries, it remains gold. So the pure gold of the soul can be covered over with the mud of delusion for aeons, but in its true nature it remains forever undefiled.

We should remember that Jesus himself said: 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect'. Thus, Yogananda often said, 'The greatest sin is to call oneself a sinner. It is a way of hypnotizing oneself with one's own weakness. Always affirm your strength in God – his strength, through you.'

Never say that you are a sinner. Don't, in that way, affirm your limitations. Dwell instead on the thought that you were made in God's image – that in your soul, in your true Self, the darkness of delusion cannot exist.

Twenty-five percent of spiritual success comes by the devotee's effort. Twenty-five percent comes by the Guru's effort on his behalf. And fifty percent comes by the grace of God.

Just as Jesus beheld the universal force of evil personified in Satan, so the great rishis beheld the universal forces of creation, preservation, and dissolution personified in definite forms. The sages of old named them Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, and Shiva the Destroyer. These primal powers were created as projections of the unmanifested Spirit to unfold His infinite drama of creation, while He, as God beyond creation, remains ever hidden in consciousness. In times of cosmic dissolution, all creation and its vast activating forces dissolve back into Spirit. There they rest until called upon again by the Great Director to reenact their roles.

When in every action you think of Him before you act, while you are performing the action, and after you have finished it, He will reveal Himself to you. You must work, but let God work through you; this is the best part of devotion. If you are constantly thinking that He is walking through your feet, working through your hands, accomplishing through your will, you will know Him. You should also develop discrimination, so that you prefer spiritually constructive, God-conscious activity to work performed without any thought of Him.

Esoteric meditation is the highest form of activity that man can perform, and it is the most balanced way to find God. If you work all the time, you may become mechanical and lose Him in preoccupation with your duties; and if you seek Him only through discriminative thought you may lose Him in the labyrinths of endless reasoning; and if you cultivate only devotion for God, your development may become merely emotional. But meditation combines and balances all these approaches. Work, eat, walk, laugh, cry, meditate – only for Him. That is the best way to live.

So long as you let the desires and weaknesses of the physical body control your thoughts and actions, you will not find Him. Always be master of your body. (...) Discipline your body and your mind. Control your senses. Find God.

I often say that this body is a switchboard and the five senses are its telephone instruments. Through them I am in touch with the world; but when I don't wish to communicate, I shut off my five senses and live in the inexpressible joy of God. The Heavenly Father doesn't want you, His children, to suffer anymore. The sensory delusion in which you live must be overcome. You should conceive of God as the highest necessity of life. Break the shackles of limitation, of dark habits and mechanical daily routine.

You must all discover your own divinity and win the kingdom of God for yourselves.

There is no other savior than your Self. The fetters of ignorance and bad habits keep you bound. It is because you are determined to follow your wrong habits that you suffer. If only you would picture life a little ahead; lest the time, the precious time that is given you, slip away fruitlessly. The Hindus have a saying: 'The child is busy with play, the youth is busy with sex, and the adult is busy with worries. How few are busy with God!' Banish the imaginary hope that happiness will come from worldly fulfillments.

Maya, cosmic illusion, 'the measurer', is the magical power in creation by which limitations and divisions are apparently present in the Immeasurable and Inseparable. In God's play (*lila*), the sole function of this delusive power is to cast a veil of ignorance over man to divert his awareness from Spirit to matter, from Reality to unreality.

Use the key of reason. (...) God gave man reason that he might find freedom from the delusion of mortality.

You are punishing the soul by keeping it buried, slumbering in matter life after life, frightened by nightmares or suffering and death. Realize that you are the soul.

Yoga is a system of scientific methods for reuniting the soul with the Spirit. (...) When the Christ Consciousness descends into the physical body of man, it becomes soul, or superconsciousness: the ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new bliss of God individualized by encasement in the body. When the soul becomes identified with the body, it manifests as ego, mortal consciousness. *Yoga* teaches that the soul must climb back up the ladder of consciousness to Spirit.

It is all right to enjoy life; the secret of happiness is not to become attached to anything.

Man has not only descended into mortal sense consciousness, but has become bound by abnormalities of that sense consciousness, such as greed, anger, and jealousy. Man must banish these abnormalities in order to find God. (...) An ordinary man is a slave of his habits. The developed *yogi* is free.

To be a *yogi* is to meditate. The *yogi* doesn't think first of food for his body upon waking each morning; he feeds his soul with the ambrosia of God-communion. Filled with the inspiration found by his deeply diving meditative mind, he is able to perform happily all the duties of the day.

To become a spiritual master, it is necessary to give more time to God. We have to make Him feel that we love Him more than anything else.

When you become experienced in meditation, able to go deep into superconsciousness, five hours of sleep are enough. The rest of the night should be used for meditation.

Unceasing devotion is essential to finding Him. In order to be a *yogi* and still keep pace with the modern world, it is necessary to meditate at home, to discipline oneself, and to perform all duties with the attitude that they are a service to God.

My greatest desire is to build temples of God in the souls of men. (...) The most important of all life's accomplishments is to establish a temple of God in one's own soul. (...) Anyone who has established God in his soul temple is a *yogi*. (...) The right road leads to the palace of God's bliss. He who once reaches there shall go no more out.

Nothing is greater than God; indifference to Him is the greatest sin.

Those who are not willing to give up all they have to find Him, will not know Him. Whoever would know God must be able to forsake all else for Him.

Man is like a puppet. The strings of his habits, emotions, passions, and senses make him dance to their bidding. They bind his soul. He who is unwilling or unable to cut himself free in order to know God will not find Him. I see myself apart from these attachments. I eat, and sometimes I don't eat; I sleep, and sometimes I don't sleep. I gave up all physical necessities to prove to myself that I do not need them. (...) We should be able to give up everything to know Him: 'Seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.'

If your innate wisdom is covered over with ignorance, you are deluded and thus stumble through life. (...) When the fog of ignorance is removed by meditation, you will see the right path.

Self-realization is not something one can learn from books; it comes only through personal experience. Realization of truth, experience of God – not dogma merely – is what every religion should bring to its followers. What Jesus Christ realized, we too must experience. He didn't teach that his followers should worship him as a personality, but rather experience what he experienced in his oneness with God. That can be attained only by meditation and by following God's laws. To worship Jesus because he is Jesus is not enough. Embrace the universal ideals he taught, and strive to be like him.

We are here on earth in this particular body-form for just a little while, to learn our lessons and to move on.

As human beings we have God-given power to cast away every habit and limitation and spread our consciousness throughout creation, penetrating not only the hearts of all creatures, but reaching out beyond the stars. Our native vastness encompasses even greater space. Such tremendous possibility lies within us. We are infinite. I live in that sphere of infinity, and I am conscious of the body only once in a while. (...) You are limited now, but when by deep, daily meditation, you become able to transfer your consciousness from the finite to the Infinite, you will be free. You are not meant to be a prisoner of the body. You are a child of God; you must live up to that divine birthright.

Wherever your mind is, that is where you will spend your time. (...) Knowledge prepares the way to love. You cannot love that which you do not know. Knowledge of God must therefore precede love of Him. (...) When you know God, you will love Him, and when you love Him, you will surrender to Him.

Until your devotion for God and awareness of Him become complete, don't rest; don't give in to sleep when you should be meditating. Never give anything preference before God. (...) Don't procrastinate. Be certain in the sincerity of your conscience that you have made the effort to commune with Him. Don't rest, don't give up until you can see Him with your own eyes, or feel Him in your own heart.

Birth, play, marriage, children, old age – life is finished. That is not living!

There is no use in becoming attached to anything in this world. So many things come and go in the Lord's cosmic drama. (...) In my heart, I see a world without me. That freedom God gives ultimately to every soul.

One great saint said, 'I care not where I may be, oh Lord, but punish me not with obliviousness of Thee.' There is not greater punishment. Jesus said: 'It is better for thee to enter into life maimed.' All suffering can be taken away by the contact of God.

If you know you are dreaming, you don't suffer from your bad experiences in the dream. (...) That release brings a sense of great freedom. We should never seek death. Rather, we should prepare our consciousness by meditation and God-communion, so that when death comes, in its own time, we are able to look upon it as a dream, nothing more. I can see the dream nature of life and death anytime I wish. Hence I attach little importance to this body. Live in the consciousness of Spirit, in that oneness with God wherein you know that life is a dream.

Your only real need is God; there is no other necessity. Be not attached to possessions, music, books, food, or any other sense pleasures. In God you have eternal life. Become aware of this great truth; otherwise your appointments in life will take over, and you will die still bound by them. If you are one with Him, you are not compelled to return to this dream earth again.

When overwhelming material, mental, or spiritual troubles beset us, we realize how limited are the powers of life in this world. Our endeavor must be not only to acquire financial security and good health, but to seek out the meaning of life.

Prayer is a demand of the soul. God did not make us beggars; He created us in His image. (...) God will not break his laws to satisfy whimsical desires.

In the seclusion of concentrated thought lies hidden the factory of all accomplishment. Remember that. In this factory continuously weave your will pattern for attaining success over opposing difficulties. Exercise your will continuously. During the day and at night, you have many opportunities to work in this factory, if you do not waste your time. At night, I withdraw from the world's demands and am by myself, an absolute stranger to the world; it is a blank. Alone with my will power, I turn my thoughts in the desired direction until I have determined in my mind exactly what I wish to do and how to do it. Then I harness my will to the right activities and it creates success. In this way I have effectively used my will power many times. But it won't work unless the

application of will power is continuous. It is a wonderful feeling to be able to say, and know, 'My will power, surcharged by the Divine Will, shall accomplish my aim.' If you lazily leave everything to the Divine Power and neglect to use your God-given will, results will not be forth-coming. The Divine Power of Its own accord wants to help you; you don't have to coax. But you do have to use your will to demand as His child, and to behave as His child. (...) Remember that behind your will is the great Divine Will, but that oceanic Power cannot come to your aid unless you are receptive. The way to become receptive is to sit quietly and concentrate your thoughts on a worthy wish until your mind and thought become completely dissolved in that idea. (...) Then you will see that whatever you require for success starts coming to you. (...) This is my experience. I used to attempt certain things just to test my will power, but I don't do that anymore. I know it works.

So, deep prayer does work. The best time to pray is at night, when there are fewer distractions. If necessary, sleep a little in the evening so that you are wide awake when you have your prayers at night. (...) God comes only when you are sincere and when you love Him for his own sake. (...) know in your mind that ultimately God alone can help. Take that thought with you into meditation every night, and with all your determination pray.

Every day undertake something that is difficult for you, and try to do it. Though you fail five times, keep on, and as soon as you have succeeded in that direction, apply your concentrated will on something else. You will thus be able to accomplish increasingly greater things. (...) In will lies His limitless power, the power that controls all the forces of nature. (...) Pray until body and mind are completely subjugated; then you will receive God's response. I constantly find that my slightest wish is answered.

Ask only for true necessities. (...) The first rule of prayer is to approach God only with legitimate desires. The second is to pray for their fulfillment, not as a beggar, but as a son: 'I am Thy child. Thou art my Father. Thou and I are One.' Now, as soon as I ask God about some undertaking, I know whether I should do it or not, and I know what steps I should and should not take.

Concentrate deeply on what you are praying. (...) Think of God continuously. Take time out of sleep: (...) 'Away with sleep! My engagement with God is more important.' Then you will receive God's response.

Only in the divine consciousness (...) can we find pure happiness. I cut the world out of my life because of its delusive influence, which makes unimportant things seem important. We are all living in a land of make-believe, trying to keep up with the Joneses; yet it is only by remaining in the consciousness of Spirit that we can be happy.

The one reason behind His creating us is His desire that we love Him and return to Him. (...) In our love is His fulfillment.

You are not determined enough. (...) To those devotees who urge, He comes. That is what He wants. (...) what is ultimately necessary is this intensity of effort to know Him. (...) His whole creation is intended to disillusion you, and thus cause you to draw back to Him. You don't know when you will be taken away from this earth; there is no law that you will enjoy a long life. This proves how foolish it is to waste time. I live minute to minute, day to day. I know only the joy of living; inside, complete resignation to Him. (...) Nothing matters but His intoxicating presence. (...) To be ever conscious of Him is the most wonderful existence.

A time will come when everything will be made or accomplished by will. Whatever you wish you will see done. This I have demonstrated again and again in my life.

If only one person responds and finds his freedom in Spirit, my task is done. The salvation of one life is worth more than the conversion of thousands.

Nighttime should be spent with God. You sleep more than necessary, and thus waste valuable hours. Night was meant to screen all the attractions of the world, that you might the more intently explore the kingdom of God.

Communion with God is the only thing to live for. You will have to come to that understanding eventually, often after much suffering. (...) There is no other place you can stay, for that is your real home.

The true practice of religion is to sit still in meditation and talk to God. But you don't get to that point of intensity, you don't concentrate enough, and that is why you remain in delusion. (...) 'One by one I close the doors of the senses, lest the aroma of the rose or the song of the nightingale distract my love from Thee.'

Most churchgoers can't sit still for an hour unless there is something going on all the while to divert their minds.

One moon dispels the darkness of the heavens. So is one soul who is trained to know God, a soul in whom there is true devotion and sincere seeking and intensity, and wherever he will go he will dispel the spiritual darkness of others. Those who are even thinking of God shine a little, but they are not able to give light to the world. Ordinary religious people are like stars, giving only a tiny light. By scientific meditation become a true devotee, that like the moon you dispel the darkness around yourself and others. Without realization through meditation, religion is the most mysterious book of all; you will never be able to understand it. But by meditation you have the proof of God's existence.

Go to your room and shut the door – make no fuss. Sit down and talk to God. Practice meditation. Let your mind become so intense that the next time you sit to meditate, you don't have to make the effort; your mind will be fixed immediately on Him. If you don't make a great effort to conquer physical and mental restlessness in the beginning, you will have difficulty every time you

meditate throughout the years. But if you make that supreme effort at the start, you will soon be happy and free.

As soon as I put my mind at the Christ center, all thoughts are gone – breath, heart, and mind are instantly still, and I am aware only of Spirit.

Make religion real by scientific methods. Science gives you definiteness and certainty.

Intensity, secrecy, devotion and constancy are necessary. You don't know when death will come. Every minute keep your mind on God. Everything you want and need is right with you; seek long and seek deeply. I meditate for hours; I see no one until I am finished. You must make up your mind that you are not going to be bothered by anyone or anything. Then you won't know time.

Don't waste your time. When you are able to live in the divine consciousness, four to six hours of sleep are plenty – you will never feel tired; you will never miss sleep. Sleep is under my control; it is the same with eating. I have something infinitely greater, and God has proven that when He is with me, all the necessities of life become unnecessary. In that consciousness, you become more healthy than the average person, more joyous, more bountiful in every way. Don't seek little things; they will divert you from God. (...) Make life simple and be a king.

People who never fast do not know from experience that man can live, as Christ did for forty days, solely by the word of God. In the early stages of a week's fasting, hunger is present; but as the days go by, less hunger and a sense of freedom are distinctly felt. Why? Because denial of gross food to the body compels it to depend on immaterial food: the life current.

Man's will power is the great generator of energy. Through will power and willingness, one is able to draw quickly on the infinite store of inner strength. A person who is unwilling to perform his daily tasks experiences a lack of energy. A man who works hard but with willingness is borne up physically and mentally by the cosmic current. One who learns and practices the metaphysical methods of living by will power and by consciously tapping the inexhaustible source of life energy is freed from many limitations of the body.

The Hindu sages and *yogis* say that matter is materialized mind-stuff, and some of them, like Jesus, have proved this truth by demonstrating the power to materialize and dematerialize their bodies or other physical objects.

(...) that which can be dissolved into invisibility cannot be said to have valid existence. In this sense, matter can be considered as not existing, but matter does have relative existence. Matter exists in relation to our mind and as an expression of invisible electronic forces that do exist, being unchangeable and immortal. (...) Just as a child is born through the instrumentality of parents, so matter is dependent on mind for its existence.

All the dualities perceived by the law of relativity are real to the dreamer, the mortal man who plays his little part in the great cosmic dream. To escape from *maya*, illusion, the law of relativity, one must awaken from the dream into eternal God-wakefulness. (...) The dualities are inherently and essentially one. The truth seeker does not try to separate them in his mind, but to rise above them by wisdom.

Until you have attained final ascension, liberation of the soul in God, life is not yet finished for you.

Everything the Lord has created is to try us, to bring out the buried soul immortality within us. That is the adventure of life, the one purpose of life.

True *yogis* are able to control the mind under all circumstances. When that perfection is reached, you are free.

Human love is meaningless unless anchored in the unconditional love of God.

Your spiritual intuition tells you how to control your life, so that you are not mastered by it. It is unwise to let the materialistic ego govern your judgment; your conscience and intuition should decide.

Plain living and high thinking should be your goal. Learn to carry all the conditions of happiness within yourself by meditating and attuning your consciousness to the ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new joy, which is God. Your happiness should never be subject to any outside influence. Whatever your environment is, don't allow your inner peace to be touched by it. Analyze yourself, make yourself what you should be and what you want to be. People seldom learn true self-control; they do things that are detrimental to their highest welfare and think they are making themselves happy, but they are not. To be able to do them, and to refrain from doing what you know is injurious – these are keys to real success and happiness. Don't keep your mind engaged in too many activities. Analyze what you get from them, and see if they are really important. Don't waste your time. (...) Remember, if each day does not find you a better person than you were the day before, you are going backward – in health, in mental peace and in soul joy.

No matter where I go, I keep my mind continuously on my soul peace.

The greatest influence in your life, stronger even than your will power, is your environment. Change that, if necessary. Until you are mentally strong, you can never be what you want to be without a good environment to help you.

Whatever you do, try to do it as nobody else has done it before. If you remember that thought, you will succeed. You should be original, and whatever you do, do well.

Seclusion is the price for greatness. Be alone within. Don't waste time, constantly seeking new excitement. Don't lead the aimless life that so many persons follow. Remain apart and live within yourself.

Ignorance is the supreme disease. When one banishes ignorance, he also banishes the causes of all physical, mental, and spiritual disease. My guru, Sri Yukteswarji, often said, 'Wisdom is the greatest cleanser'.

Cessation of fear comes with the contact of God, nothing else.

It is true that on a longer fast you may feel weak during the first few days, because the life force has been accustomed to dependence on food. But gradually, as the days pass, you no longer feel any weakness. Your life force and spirit become detached from food. You see that the body is sustained by life force alone. (...) Becoming detached from dependence on outer physical sources of bodily sustenance, the life force sees that it is being supported from within, and wonders how this is so. The mind then says: 'The solids on which the body used to depend are nothing more than gross condensations of energy. You are pure energy. And you are pure consciousness.' Then, whatever command the mind impinges on the consciousness of the life force, it will manifest accordingly. (...) By long fasting, you realize that everything is mind.

Our consciousness survives after death, but the ordinary man loses that feeling of continuity and so thinks he is dead.

Everyone should develop his mental power, so that he is able to function well under all circumstances.

For the little while you are here, you make too much of this show. Don't become too involved in it.

Spiritual development must balance material advancement. (...) Unless a balance is created by developing spiritual realization along with advancement of the physical sciences, individuals and nations will be lost in misery and destruction. (...) Only spiritual consciousness – realization of God's presence in oneself and in every other living being – can save the world. I see no chance for peace without it. Begin with yourself. There is no time to waste. It is your duty to do your part to bring God's kingdom on earth.

People try to find happiness in drink, sex, and money, but the pages of history are filled with tales of their disillusionment.

Knowing God is more satisfying than the fulfillment of any earthly desire. Every lesser wish of your heart will be taken care of when you have Him who is your greatest treasure. This is my own true testimony. I do not seek things now; they seek me. When God gives Himself to you, He will fulfill your slightest wish. It is not necessary to ask. That is the state you want. But first you have to prove that you desire the Lord Himself more than His gifts.

Out of the abundance God has given me, I have kept nothing for myself. I am always free; nothing belongs to me.

Those who are not seeking God as the paramount necessity of life do not understand the meaning of religion.

Very early in life, I saw that theological and even scriptural answers to certain questions could never fully satisfy the soul, unless their truth were experienced through realization and God-communion.

Seek until you find the path most suited to the spiritual inclination of your heart and mind, and then be steadfast.

You must hunger so deeply for God that you will seek Him out in earnest. The purpose of religious lectures is to awaken in you that irresistible soul-longing for Him.

What man does not realize is that unless and until he goes back to the Source, back to God, he will have to struggle to fulfill endless desires. (...) Man cannot help having desires, and it is not a sin to have them – but most human longings hamper fulfillment of the supreme desire to return to God; hence they are detrimental to man's happiness. Until he wants and has God, man will continue to long for whatever else he believes will make him happy. But to him who has God, instant fulfillment of all desires comes automatically.

There are two classes of desires: those that help us to find God, and those that obstruct our finding Him.

All desires should be satisfied in the divine way. When you try to satisfy them in the worldly way, you only multiply your difficulties. If you learn to give every desire to God, He will see to it that your good desires are fulfilled and the harmful ones are overcome. There is no protector greater than your conscience, and the divine quality of your good desires. If you but looked at your soul, the all-perfect reflection of God within you, you would find all your desires satisfied! In that divine consciousness, having which, no other gain is greater, you would be unmoved even if the whole world were given to you; neither would praise elate you, nor blame hurt. You would feel only the great joy of God within.

Always seek the guidance of the Divine in trying to fulfill your legitimate desires, because that is the supreme way to receive the answers to all your prayers. But one thing you must remember: cut out begging from your prayer! Change your old attitude of supplication. You should pray to God intimately, as His child, which you are. God does not object when you pray from your ego, as a stranger and a beggar, but you will find that your efforts are limited by that consciousness. God does not want you to give up your own will power, which is your divine birthright as His child.

Unfulfilled desires remain in the heart. (...) The behavior of even the smallest child reveals certain characteristics of past lives. (...) If the image of God within you is distorted in this life by anger or fear, and you do not conquer such uncharacteristic qualities now, you will be reborn with them; and you will have the burden of these misery-creating tendencies until you overcome them in some future incarnation. It is better, therefore, to work out or overcome all your desires now. They would be finished immediately and for all time in the supreme joy of God's presence; but until you know Him, your unconquered desires will remain to hound you.

There are two ways of finishing your desires – by realizing, through reason and discrimination, or wisdom, that only God can give permanent unalloyed happiness, and by fulfillment. In many cases, desires lie hidden within the subconscious. You think they are finished, but they are not. Life is indeed a great mystery; but the mystery clears away when you dissect life with the scalpel of reason. If every day you sit quietly for a little while and analyze yourself, you will discover that you have many unsatisfied desires. They are like dangerous germs that you carry through life, and wherever you go, in this life or the next, they will go with you.

Rise above your moods and bodily habits. Be more detached. In this way, you will conquer. Separate yourself from the consciousness of the body. By discrimination, you can conquer the senses. Discrimination is the fire that burns up desire.

It is a general practice to store in the attic all of one's unwanted, unnecessary 'junk', and once in a while to have a good housecleaning. Similarly, hidden away in the attic of your subconscious mind are many potentially harmful desires that one day may give you great trouble. It is important, therefore, to analyze yourself. Perhaps you are a hateful or a moody or angry type of person. If so, those stored traits are the result of your own past behavior. In order to clean out your mental attic of such unwanted furnishings, you must vigorously employ constructive, positive, loving action.

Try to behold God in your enemy, for by doing so, you release yourself from evil vengeful desires that destroy your peace of mind. By heaping hatred upon hatred, or giving hate in return for hate, (...) you poison your system, physically as well as emotionally, with your own venom.

Think of the power of the conscience of Jesus. His accusers spat upon him and crucified him, and yet he said, 'Father, forgive them'. That kind of discrimination is the only power that will bring light on your path.

Today you wish for one thing and tomorrow you hanker after something else. Your mind, having descended from almighty God, is not satisfied with the offerings of this world, and it will never be satisfied, because you have lost your soul's richest treasure, which alone can satisfy all your desires, and that is God.

It is true, there are some good and necessary desires, and you should strive to fulfill them. But never forget, while pursuing your little desires, to satisfy first your supreme desire – for God. Belief in the necessity of fulfilling lesser desires and duties first is man's greatest delusion. (...) First comes my duty to God, and then I take care of all lesser duties. (...) So seek Him first.

Don't be afraid of death, but be prepared for it.

Life is not what it seems to be. Don't trust it, for it is very tricky, and full of disappointments. Perfection was not meant to be found here.

Take God, not life, seriously. This is not the kingdom of God; it is God's laboratory, where He is testing souls to see if they will overcome evil desires by good ones, and make Him their supreme desire, so they can return home to His kingdom.

Just as old movies are shown over and over, so basically the same old incidents occur and recur in life. And although life will go on eternally, the same themes depicted in past films will be portrayed again and again. It is true that history repeats itself. (...) Whatever comes in life, take it joyfully, impersonally, as you would a motion picture. (...) To remain even-minded, no matter what comes, is one of the best ways to conquer delusive desires. (...) Christ also demonstrated that spirit. Even though Jesus was tortured, God's love was not taken away, he did not lose his divine consciousness. God's protection of our joy and peace is the greatest fortress possible. (...) Your soul is a divine temple of God. The darkness of mortal ignorance and limitations must be driven out of that temple.

Be afraid of nothing. Hating none, giving love to all, feeling the love of God, seeing His presence in everyone, and having but one desire – for His constant presence in the temple of your consciousness – that is the way to live in this world. Those who have other desires will not know true satisfaction.

Desires are formed according to one's environment; they are created by, and therefore limited by, your sense perceptions.

The desire to be one with God is the greatest desire of all. When you are through with any lesser desire, you soon pick up another, but when you have God, all other desires are satisfied completely.

The world environment will try to prevent you from remembering that the only worthwhile desire is to have God. But every day you should remind yourself of this.

Wrong environment saps your will and invites wrong desires. Live with thieves and you think that is the only life. But live with divine persons, and after having divine communion, no other desires can tempt you. All become stale. Therefore, even a few moments of deep meditation, or the company of a saint, will be a raft of inspiration to carry you across this ocean of delusion to the shores of God.

Joy lies in continually thinking of God. The longing for Him should be constant. A time comes when your mind never wanders away, when not even the greatest affliction of body, mind and soul can take consciousness from the living presence of God. (...) remain in the castle of His presence, whence death nor naught else can take you away. (...) When you are proof against all desires, you are enjoying the Presence Eternal.

This life is strange. Everything is subject to change. That is why one should not anchor his happiness on this life. Our time will pass on; what you are seeing now will be gone one day. Change is good if you don't let it hurt you. When it does hurt, the rebellion you feel is meant to show you that you should not have any desires. When you are anchored in that great Spirit, you are enjoying everything, but without attachment. Therefore it is worthwhile to make the effort to know Him. Otherwise life can horribly disillusion you.

That is the way life is; one by one, things familiar and dear vanish from our sight.

Scrutinize your desires carefully now. Sort them and keep only good ones, and let not even those good desires choke off the one important desire, for God. (...) When this book of life shall be closed, there will remain with you only the realization gained from those desires you have fulfilled in connection with God.

When you show God that you are willing to sacrifice everything to know Him, He will come to you. The hardest obstacle to overcome is yourself.

Learn to control your mind and body. Be king of yourself. Carry within you a portable heaven, and in life or in death, in heaven or in hades, that inner heaven will be with you.

Have God first. Have God now. Don't wait, because delusion is very strong. Before you know it, the time will have come for you to quit this world. (...) I urge you to pray not for little things, but for his presence. Only that prayer is worthwhile. If you are willing to sacrifice an hour or two of sleep for meditation every night, you will enter the kingdom of God. (...) Bad habits and restlessness will try to shake you from your effort, but keep your mind on God and you will find his presence within you.

Desires for worldly joys create the magnetic attraction that draws man back to earth, life after life. Reincarnation is no longer necessary for those who have fulfilled their desires in God.

Don't rest until you demonstrate God in your life. He will give you everything you ever wished for, and He will test you. The tests in the spiritual life are greater than in any other. But you who pass His tests shall say: 'Lord, my greatest prayer has been answered. What else could my heart want or need, but You?'

Every effort one makes for God will be noticed by Him. However, if one doesn't follow a proven scientific way to God, his progress is comparable to riding in an old bullock cart.

Without God-communion, the lifeblood of religion is missing. Church is not the place for dances, movies, and frequent social gatherings. These divert people from God. One can find sufficient worldly entertainment in town. Go to church for one reason: communion with God. Divine communion is the criterion of religion. (...) Hearing about truth cannot relieve the soul's hunger; if you are content to hear truth without making any effort to know God, it has falsely satisfied you. You must hunger so deeply for God that you will seek Him out in earnest. The purpose of religious lectures and sermons is to awaken in you that irresistible soul-longing for Him.

The more you concentrate on the outside, the less you will know of the inner glory of the everlasting joy of Spirit. The more you concentrate within, the less you will have of difficulties without. But most people do not understand this truth because of the influence of worldly company and environment, and bad habits. Environment keeps you more or less engrossed; it never allows you to think of deeper realities.

He who conquers himself is the greatest victor in this battle of life. (...) If people would only learn to concentrate on the real values of life, they would find true happiness; but they are carried away by earthly desires.

The only thing to live for is the contact of the Divine, the communion with God. That is why Jesus said, 'The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few.'

Learn to live simply. 'His mind is full with contentment whose desires ever flow inward. That man is like a changeless ocean which is kept brimful with constantly entering waters. He is not a *muni* who bores holes of desires in his reservoir of peace and lets the waters escape.' The true *muni* is a monk who observes spiritual silence (*mauna*), by controlling the waves of thoughts and feelings that are ceaselessly in motion during ordinary consciousness.

In the solitude of inner silence you learn about the Holy Ghost.

You cannot have God and mammon together. You must give yourself to God wholly. He is the Eternal Lover, and He is begging for the love of you all. You must learn to use your will and concentration in order to seek God wholeheartedly. (...) You can get God only by giving your time to Him in deep meditation. You must make the effort to please God first. It is impossible to please all. (...) You must strive to be one with God. Practice meditation every day and learn to love Him deeply, and to love your neighbors as yourself. (...) You have jailed yourself in the body because of ignorance of your Father. You must free yourself from this jail. You must keep your mind riveted to God no matter what comes.

Your actions are dictated by your habits. You are always being forced by habits to do things that you don't want to do.

As a small cup cannot hold an ocean within it, no matter how willing it may be to do so, likewise the cup of material human consciousness cannot grasp the universal Christ Consciousness, no matter how desirous it is, but when the student, by the method of concentration and meditation, enlarges the caliber of his consciousness. (...) Thus, according to Jesus, all who can actually find their souls one with Christ consciousness, by intuitive self-realization, can be called the 'sons of God'.

To seek happiness outside ourselves is like trying to lasso a cloud. Happiness is not a thing; it is a state of mind. It must be lived. Neither worldly power nor moneymaking schemes can ever capture happiness. Mental restlessness results from an outward focus of awareness. Restlessness itself guarantees that happiness will remain elusive. Temporal power and money are not states of mind. Once obtained, they dilute a person's happiness. Certainly they cannot enhance it.

The more widely we scatter our energies, the less power we have left to direct toward any specific undertaking. Octopus habits of worry and nervousness rise from ocean depths in the subconscious, fling tentacles around our minds, and crush to death all that we once knew of inner peace. True happiness is never to be found outside the Self.

Like the short-lived roses, countless human beings appear daily in earth's garden. In their youth, they open fresh, hopeful buds, welcoming life's promises and nodding with eager expectancy to every breeze of sense-enjoyment. And then, the petals begin to fade; expectancy turns to disappointment. In the twilight of old age they drop, gray in disillusionment. Mark the rose's example: Such is the destiny of human beings who live centered in the senses.

Analyze, with understanding born of introspection, the true nature of sense-pleasures. For even as you delight in them, don't you sense in your heart a chilling breath of doubt and uncertainty? You cling to them, yet know in your heart that someday they cannot but betray you. Closer scrutiny reveals that sense-indulgence actually mocks its votaries. What it offers is not freedom, but soulbondage. The way of escape lies not, as most people imagine, down moss-soft lanes of further indulgence, but up hard, rocky paths of self-control.

A materialistic life tempts mankind with smiles and assurances, but is consistent only in this: it never fails, eventually, to break all its promises!

As a man allows himself to depend increasingly on circumstances outside himself for his physical, mental and spiritual nourishment, never looking within to his own source, he gradually depletes his reserves of energy.

Possession of material riches, without inner peace, is like dying of thirst while bathing in a lake. If material poverty is to be avoided, spiritual poverty is to be abhorred! It is spiritual poverty, not material lack, that lies at the core of all human suffering.

Understand and feel the superior joys of the inner life, and you will prefer them to the fleeting pleasures of the outer world. (...) You love the outer pleasures of the senses because you happened to be captured by them first, and then you remained their prisoner.

It is important to differentiate between your needs and your wants. Your needs are few, while your wants can be limitless. In order to find freedom and bliss, minister only to your needs. Stop creating limitless wants and pursuing the will-o'-the-wisp of false happiness. The more you depend upon conditions outside yourself for happiness, the less happiness you will experience. Fostering the desire for luxuries is the surest way to increase misery.

Fools, imagining the play to be real and lasting, weep through the sad parts, grieve that the happy parts cannot endure, and sorrow that the play must, at last, come to an end. Suffering is the punishment for spiritual blindness. The wise, however, seeing the drama of life for the utter delusion it is, seek eternal happiness in the Self within.

The joyous rays of the soul can be perceived if you interiorize your attention. Do not search for happiness only in beautiful clothes, delicious dinners, and other comforts. These will imprison your happiness behind the bars of outwardness.

Persons of strong character are usually the happiest. They do not blame others for troubles that can be traced to their own actions and lack of understanding. They know that no one has the power to add to their happiness or detract from it, unless they themselves allow the adverse thoughts or wicked actions of others to affect them.

The real food for the happiness tree can be supplied only through meditation and actual contact with God in daily life. Without our contact with the Infinite source, from which all our human faculties and inspirations spring, we can never grow perfectly and completely.

If you succeed in finding happiness in your soul, then even though you die tomorrow and join the long procession of departed souls that slowly moves down pillared corridors of centuries, you will always carry with you that priceless treasure. Once soul-happiness is yours, no one will be able to take it from you, however long be your journey toward timelessness and eternity.

Happiness depends to some extent upon external conditions, but chiefly upon conditions of the inner mind. In order to be happy, one needs good health, an efficient mind, a prosperous life, the right work and, above all, an all-accomplishing wisdom. A man cannot be happy just by holding the inner calm while completely ignoring the struggle for existence and the effort for success. But without internal happiness, one can be a prisoner of worries in a rich castle. Happiness does not depend upon success and wealth alone, but upon struggling against the difficulties of life with an acquired attitude of unshakable inner happiness.

Evil is the absence of true joy. That is what makes it evil, you see. Otherwise, can you say that a tiger commits evil in killing its prey? To kill is the tiger's nature, given to it by God. Nature's laws are unpersonal. Evil comes into the picture when one has the potential for attaining inner joy. Anything that separates us from that divine state of being is evil for us, because it distances our awareness from that which we really are, and from that which we really want in life.

Self-control at first produces unhappiness because of the separation from the pleasure-yielding senses. After self-control ripens, however, the soul begins to experience finer, happier perceptions and to enjoy itself far more than when it lived identified with the sense-pleasures. The devotee, suffering from fear of the feeling of emptiness, must realize that renunciation is not an end in itself. Rather, it is a means to an end, and teaches one to shift the attention from lesser sense-pleasures to deeper soul pleasures.

The only worthwhile accomplishments are not those we achieve outwardly, but the victories we win over ourselves.

Contented, self-chosen, habitual seclusion is the price of real happiness. When you are forced into a crowd of talkers, retire within the cell of your deep thoughts and enjoy the peace of your inner fountain of silence. (...) Don't waste the perception of God's presence, acquired in meditation, by useless chatting. (...) In devoting time unnecessarily to conversation and exuberant laughter, you'll find you have nothing left inside. Fill the pail of your consciousness with the milk of meditative peace; then, keep it filled.

Meditate regularly, and you will find a joy inside that is real. You will then have something you can compare to sense pleasures. That comparison will automatically make you want to forsake your sorrow-producing bad habits. The best way to overcome temptation is to have something more fulfilling with which to compare it.

Never let your mind be seduced by restlessness, through joking too much, too many distractions, and so on. Be deep. As soon as you succumb to restlessness, all the old troubles will begin to exert their pull on the mind once again: sex, wine, and money. (...) Be deep in everything you do. (...) Be joyful inside, but always inwardly a little withdrawn. Be centered in the joy within. Dwell always in the Self. Come down a little bit if you have to, to eat, or talk, or to do your work; then, withdraw into the Self again. Be calmly active, and actively calm. That is the way of the *yogi*.

Simplicity is not grinding poverty. It is not the polar opposite of wealth. To live simply is to pursue a quiet path of moderation. In a life of balance between opposite extremes lies inner happiness.

Most so-called 'happiness' is nothing but suffering in disguise.

In our eyes is the entire history of our life. It cannot be concealed from those who know how to read it. These are spiritual eyes, half-spiritual eyes, dishonest eyes, sensual eyes. What one does is written there.

If you strive to serve God, you have served everyone. Seek to please Him, not man.

Man can change his outer and inner nature by concentration. A person of strong mind can be whatever he wants to be. The limited human personality can be greatly expanded by meditation.

You shouldn't identify yourself as any particular type of individual. Rather be able to change your personality whenever you want to. (...) Truly, you can accomplish anything if you do not accept limitations by identifying yourself with your present personality. When you say to me that you can't do this or that, I don't believe it. Whatever you make up your mind to do, you can do. God is the sum total of everything, and His image is within you. He can do anything, and so can you, if you learn to identify yourself with His inexhaustible nature.

When you develop your divine nature, you become completely detached about the body; you no longer feel identified with it. You look after it as you would attend to a little child. As you realize your true Self more and more, by meditation, you become freed from mental and physical pains. You cast off your lifelong limitations. That is the best way to live out your days on earth.

Remember that it is not harmful to own things, but it is harmful to be owned by them.

You will find that everything will betray you if you betray your loyalty to God. So let not one drop of oil fall from the lamp of your attention in the sanctuary of inner silence as you meditate each day, and as you carefully perform your duties in the world.

Home lies within. What is the use of developing a personality based on worldly values, which are ever changeful and fleeting? Rather strive for a personality that is derived from your living in the continuous consciousness of God.

Your mind has a vast, a limitless span, but you don't realize it. I can go into the depths of sleep and enjoy the sleep state and at the same time be with the world. Or I can sleep and dream, and at the same time also hear everything that is going on around me. Sometimes I sleep just as the ordinary person does, and again I can sleep and consciously watch myself sleeping. In the superconscious state, you can see that your body and mind are sleeping and yet have total awareness of all happenings. This is possible only when you have developed the ability to enter at will the superconsciousness, and return at will to the ordinary state of mind.

You need never worry that by meditation, you may go out of the body and fail to return. That idea is entirely false. The *maya*-induced attachment to the body is so powerful that you can't escape from it that easily. Even if your ordinary waking awareness is obliterated, so long as your superconscious mind remains tied to the body, you cannot leave it permanently.

You can never know God except through humbleness, wisdom and devotion.

Those who go deep in the superconscious automatically develop unusual spiritual powers, and control over natural forces. But no man of true God-consciousness ever uses his powers unwisely, for egotistical display. Sages realize that the Lord is the Sole Doer, and humbly return to Him the extraordinary gifts He has bestowed on them.

The superconscious is that state in which you can consciously, during wakefulness or sleep, produce any sensation in your body at will, without external stimulus. (...) in the superconscious state, you can see or know anything that you wish to – not by imagination, but in reality.

So long as even a little tremor of thought and mental restlessness is present, you cannot reach cosmic consciousness. (...) One must go beyond the subconscious plane and reach the superconscious state to have real spiritual experiences and realizations of Truth.

The more peace you feel during concentration and the longer you concentrate, the deeper you will go in God.

Sleep less, and give more hours to meditation; the rest you will enjoy is a hundred times more refreshing than sleep.

Unless you can cut off sounds from your consciousness, you cannot reach God. That is why saints have sought the seclusion of caves and forests. Plunge into the inner silence again and again by practicing the methods of concentration and meditation I have given you, and you will find great peace and happiness. (...) The silence of deep meditation should be practiced more in all churches and temples.

Deep sincerity is necessary on the spiritual path.

The soul can never be satisfied with anything but Him and His love. His spirit is the reality that nothing else can match.

Meditation is the way to reclaim your lost divinity.

I do everything with the greatest pleasure and spirit of service. Inwardly I am all the time with God. And though I sleep very little, I always feel fresh, because I perform my duties with the right attitude: that it is a privilege to serve.

Sometime you have to break the habit of attachment to the mortal body and get back to God. There is no alternative. You are a prodigal son here on earth. Your infinite nature must be rediscovered. You will never be happy so long as you remain habit-mired in ignorance of your eternal soul-nature. It does not matter who you are; the only way you can find lasting joy is to go back to God.

Temptation is not our own creation; it belongs to the world of *maya*, and all men are subject to it. But to enable us to free ourselves, God gave us reason, conscience, and will power.

The last portion of life is more important than the first, because what you are at the end of this life is what you will be at the beginning of the next.

To recapitulate the four basic types of consciousness in man: *Sudra* is the sense-bound state of existence; *Vaisya* is the business or creative stage of man. *Kshatriya* is the warrior state, when man desires to do battle with his senses and to conquer his attachment to them. *Brahmin* is the wisdom state, attained by man when he has overcome all attachment to the senses and remains consciously immersed in Brahma, God.

You must be prepared to give up everything for communion with God. He will test you.

The only experience that is real, the only experience that brings happiness, is awareness of the Presence of God.

My sincere and complete devotion to my earthly mother was the first cause of my love for the Divine Mother. Thus it was my great love for my mother that led to my illumination. (...) The mother is an expression of the unconditional love of God.

You must feel as well as think; if you do not have feeling along with your thoughts, you will not always be successful in reaching the right conclusion. Feeling is an expression of intuition, the repository of all knowledge. Feeling and thought, or reason, must be balanced; only then does the divine image of God within you, the soul, manifest its full nature. Hence *Yoga* teaches one how to balance his powers of reason and feeling. One who does not have both equally is not a fully developed person.

I see behind all creation the kingdom of my Father.

Ordinary man busies himself seeking wealth and sense pleasures, and wastes time in shallow social engagements. Man makes a nervous wreck of himself pursuing the fleeting attractions of this world, whereas the joy and wonder of God, which is beyond description, would give him so much more: happiness and fulfillment unending.

Only a little while you live as an individualized image in God's dream-world. You are dreaming your mortal existence; it is part of God's cosmic dream. Every day you are living in this dream of physical being. Every night, in deep sleep, it is gone. And one day, when you awaken in God – who is your real Self – the dream will be gone forever.

Be adamant, strong, and unflinching in your determination to discover the One who is hiding behind this creation. Snatch yourself away from the demands of the world, and do not go to bed at night until you have consciously communed with God. I seldom retire before four o'clock in the morning; only during the night can I find freedom from my responsibilities and be wholly with God.

Busy, busy, busy! That is life's demand. You have to reserve time each day to get away from the world and be with God. Control your life, and set aside time to practice meditation for communion with Him. Then everything in this world will be a wonder to you.

The visible man is delusion. The invisible man within is the real one. Concentrate on that invisible you.

How will you gain control? First you must learn to live more in silence.

Everything you see is the result of an idea. You could not visualize anything without thought. Invisible thought gives all things their reality. Therefore if you can control your thought process, you can make anything visible; you can materialize it by the power of your concentration.

You will understand how the invisible man is tied to the physical body – by attachments, the mental and emotional cords of desires for certain experiences on the physical plane. When by deeper meditation you can untie those cords, he will be free and you will know that you are a real image of God. Seek out that invisible man who is held captive in the jungle of physical sensations and matter.

If a departed soul has unfinished desires created while on the earth plane, it continues to feel in the astral those desires and the wish to express itself through a material body. And so that soul in its astral vehicle is drawn again into a united sperm and ovum cell and is once more in a physical form.

It is unwise to ascribe to yourself permanently any defect of your body. (...) When you are reborn the next time, you bring with you that negative consciousness, and if that negative thought is strong enough, it may inhibit the creative action of the intelligent life force. (...) You should therefore never identify yourself with the flaws of your physical form. They do not belong to you, for you are the pure, perfect image of God – the soul.

Give time to Him alone, without work. I always save time in the morning and at night for God, and the rest of the day I serve Him wholeheartedly. The Lord says in the Gita: 'Whatever actions thou dost perform... dedicate them all as offerings to Me. Thus no action of thine can enchain thee with good or evil *karma*.' (...) It is His world, not yours. You are here to work for Him. Life will very much disappoint and disillusion you if you labor only for yourself.

One should teach only those things he has practiced and experienced.

Worshipping Jesus is not truly meaningful until one can expand his consciousness to receive within himself the Christ Consciousness. That is the second coming of Christ.

He is a master whose consciousness has been refined to receive and reflect perfectly the light of God.

A master's most important spiritual accomplishment is the conquering of *maya*, delusion: the attainment of that realization which makes God supreme in one's life – more important than life itself. Christ performed his greatest miracle when he allowed himself to suffer on the cross, saying, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do'. (...) His victory has immortalized him as an example for the ages.

Jesus warned that we should seek the kingdom of God first. Your consciousness must be with God. This is man's highest duty.

It is not necessary to forsake all things outwardly to find God, if everything you do is without selfish motive, and done only to please Him.

To avoid the pitfalls of the two extremes, renunciation of the world, or drowning in material life, man should so train his mind by constant meditation that he can perform the necessary dutiful actions of his daily life and still maintain the consciousness of God within. (...) A balanced life of meditation and activity, without attachment to the fruits of action, is the example set by Krishna's life.

The conditions of the world should not bother you. Be not attached to anything. Jesus fasted for forty days and kept his mind always on God. If you are in the world and have no attachment to it, you are a real *yogi*. To remain in the candy store and not touch the candy is true renunciation.

Jesus said: 'If thy hand offend thee, cut it off.' That kind of determination is needed. You must realize in your heart and soul this truth: 'Lord, You alone are mine. I am here just to please You.'

Renounce not only outwardly, but mentally too. (...) It is more important to be clean inside than outside.

The principles of morality are a necessary beginning in the practice of religion.

Real happiness can stand the challenge of all outer experiences. When you can bear the crucifixions of others' wrongs against you and still return love and forgiveness, and when you can keep that divine inner peace intact despite all painful thrusts of outer circumstance, then you shall know this happiness.

Those who are inwardly content are living rightly.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me. God-realization should be the goal of living. Material duties cannot be performed without power borrowed from God. To perform one's ordinary duties, and forget Him, is the highest sin. Sin means ignorance, acting against one's highest good.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. To worship a symbol and to forget what it stands for is to worship a graven image, because you have lost sight of its significance.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. To keep apart one day for Him is in the best interests of your own welfare. Sunday is the sun's day – the bright day of wisdom. Observe the Sabbath; it will be a salve to the lacerations of the preceding six days. Everyone needs one day a week in the spiritual hospital to heal his mental wounds.

In the early morning, and before retiring, you should immerse yourself in His peace.

India's sages counsel not only a regular day for seclusion, but stress the need for quiet meditation during four specific periods every day. In the early morning, before you get up or see anyone, remain calm, feeling peace. At noon, be quiet for a while before taking lunch; and before your evening meal, have another time for peace. Before going to bed, go into that silence again. Those who faithfully observe silence in seclusion during these four times of the day cannot but feel in tune with God.

Those who do not observe the Sabbath by feeling this divine peace develop great moodiness. They become nervous automatons. Through the portals of silence, the healing sun of wisdom and peace will shine upon you.

In this world, we are limited by our thoughts. (...) A person is mentally free when his judgment is no longer influenced by prejudices, customs, and conventions that are imposed on him by racial, national, and familial background.

God has given you waking consciousness, subconsciousness, and superconsciousness. Your conscious mind has certain limitations; after a few years it begins to forget various things. But your subconscious mind has a greater memory capacity; every thought and experience is stored in the repository of subconsciousness. Your conscious mind may forget every word that I am saying, but your subconscious mind is registering them all. Behind the subconscious is your superconscious mind, which never forgets anything. The superconscious mind has kept a record of everything you have done, every

thought you have thought. When death comes, all these thoughts and experiences flash through your mind before you leave the body. Those impressions that are strongest determine the environment and habits of your next life.

As an ego, your consciousness is present everywhere within yourself, and is therefore present in each thought that you think. If you can expand your consciousness beyond ego into the realm of superconsciousness, you can watch from that point all the thousands of thoughts passing through your conscious mind. Those who have developed the superconscious mind can remember all the thoughts of a lifetime, and of previous lives as well. In divine memory, nothing is forgotten. Our thoughts are real and they are eternal, ever present in the ether.

Life and death are but a passing from dream to dream. They are only thoughts: you are dreaming you are alive, and you are dreaming you are dead. When you get into the great Christ consciousness, you see that life and death are dreams of God. Because Jesus lived in that consciousness, he could say: 'Destroy this [bodily] temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' He knew he could transform that dream of death into a dream of life, even as God can.

Slavish response to the various sensations of the body disturbs both mind and soul. With the disturbance of the soul, man loses his true nature, which is calmness.

Oversensitivity to pleasure and pain strengthens their effects; reduced sensitivity makes one less subject to pain and less enslaved to sense pleasures. I have trained my body and mind to be less sensitive and have found myself free from sense disturbances. That training is the way to gain freedom.

Indian masters train their students to free themselves completely from slavery to the body and its sensations. The comforts and conveniences developed in the West encourage pampering the body; as a result, little or no effort is made to cultivate mental strength. In India we are trained from childhood to nip in the bud the dictates of sensations. In my school at Ranchi, we had the children sleep on little mats on the hard floor, and they grew healthier. Westerners are conditioned to too many external necessities in order to sleep well or be at peace. In India, we were taught to sit on the hot sand in meditation. Gradually we could sit in the heat all day long; and in the cold, likewise. As a result of this training, I found such mental strength that nothing can affect or disturb my consciousness. When I disconnect my mind from the sense telephones, I am not bothered by anything.

To be free of sensations, one has to separate himself mentally from the body. Therefore the saints teach mental detachment from both pleasure and pain.

Those who are afraid of death cannot know their true soul nature. (...) The coward lives over and over again a mental picture of pain and death. The valiant experience only the final death, quick and without pain. If one dies of natural causes or is spiritually advanced, the body of sensations simply drops off, and when the consciousness reawakens on another plane, it has all the sensations of the body without any physical form. Awareness is all mind, just as it is in dreams.

When you manifest changelessness, you become a king among souls. Changeless within, even though body and mind are constantly changing, you become one with the Changeless Infinite. 'The relativities of existence (birth and death, pleasure and pain) have been overcome, even here in this world, by those of fixed equal-mindedness. Thereby are they enthroned in Spirit – verily, the taintless, the perfectly balanced Spirit.'

Memory is that power by which we mentally reproduce our experiences. (...) There is no value in having experiences if we cannot recall and relive them.

Memory has two natures: mortal memory reproduces the experiences of this life, and divine memory reproduces the experiences of the soul throughout all incarnations.

As a human being, you make your greatest evolutionary progress by the power of thought. Set aside some time each day to improve your mind.

The trouble with most people is that when they are performing an action, they are thinking about something else. They don't know how to concentrate on what they are doing when they are doing it. You should learn to think of one thing at a time with all the power of your mind. Your whole attention should be there. Don't drag along. Doing things in a lackadaisical way leads to failure and misery.

Man should not be a psychological automaton, like the animal, which acts only through instinct. To be unthinking is a great sin against Spirit, which abides in you; we are meant to be conscious of what we do. (...) Do everything consciously, not absentmindedly. (...) Everything we do should be the result of premeditated thought. Choose what is important and cut out the nonessentials. (...) Aim for high goals. It is a waste to use the power of thought to obtain things that are not important. Learn to remove the weeds that have grown in the garden of the mind. Make your mental garden so beautiful that God will come there. If you want to have such a mental garden, blooming in the soil of wisdom, you must make your life simple.

For those individual souls who have sought and found God, the search is over.

Why was temptation given to man? That he might look for the One who is more tempting than any worldly temptation. The earthly lures that surround you are not intended to ensnare you, but to cause you to seek beyond them.

Most people don't call deeply enough to Him, and so they never find Him. You must speak clearly to Him in the language of your soul.

I am never separated from Him for a second. That is the state I wanted and worked for. I remember that once in a while I used to feel that He had gone away from me, and at such time I wanted to die rather than live without Him. I didn't find happiness in anything. Thus does the lover of God suffer when separated from Him. But a time comes when the devotee beholds the Lord dancing everywhere, and feels the immortal fountain of His spirit and His bliss ever bubbling in his soul. This is what you feel if you meditate. Pray with such intensity that He will come to you. In the Gita is a beautiful promise from the Lord: 'Immerse thy mind in Me alone; concentrate on Me thy discriminative perception; and beyond doubt thou shalt dwell immortally in Me.'

Perfect yourself in the *Yoga* path, which embraces bodily discipline, mental discipline, and spiritual discipline. *Yoga* is not a myth; it is a true science. It is the highest path.

You have gone away from God like the prodigal son, and it is only by returning to Him that you will make this vale of tears a haven of heaven. There is no other way.

No one can bring you salvation unless you earn it – not through belief, not through following dogma, but by your own knowledge and experience.

Habit is an automatic mechanism for performing actions without expending the mental and physical labor ordinarily involved in performing actions that are new to us. Wrongly used, this mechanism is an archenemy, threatening man's citadel of free choice. (...) Through the power of deep, concentration-trained attention, any habit may be installed, that is, new patterns may be made in the brain – almost instantaneously and at will.

In this world, everybody wants to use us for his own purpose. Only God – and a real master who knows God – can truly love us. The ordinary human being does not know what love is.

Many people don't understand the terrible nature of habit. Some persons form habits very quickly. (...) Since you don't know what type of subconscious mind you have, or what your hidden tendencies may be, it is best to avoid actions that may lead to harmful habits. If the mind is not strong in wisdom and discrimination, it acts like a blotting paper, absorbing bad habits quickly.

Fixed beliefs about habits are a form of slavery. Don't be slave even to good habits. You should not permit yourself to be bound by any habit of living; be able, rather, to change your habits as wisdom dictates. (...) That divine nonattachment to habit is the freedom advocated by the masters of India.

Repeated performance of an action creates a mental blueprint. Every action is performed mentally as well as physically, and repetition of a particular action and its accompanying thought-pattern causes the formation of subtle electrical pathways in the physiological brain, somewhat like the grooves in a phonograph record. After a time, whenever you put the needle of attention on those grooves

of electrical pathways, it plays back the record of the original mental blueprint. Each time an action is repeated, these grooves of electrical pathways become deeper, until the slightest attention automatically plays those same actions over and over again. Yet by concentration and will power you can erase even deep grooves of long-standing habits. (...) Command your mind, again and again. The best time of the day to do this is in the morning, when the will and attention are fresh. Repeatedly affirm your freedom, using all the strength of your will power. (...) If your mind is strong, and if you surrender yourself to God and forget the body, you will be able to maintain your freedom as a child of God. Make up your mind that no habit has a permanent hold on you. If your wisdom is strong, you can convince yourself in a second of what you should do. Awaken that wisdom which revives in you the power of free will, enabling you to rise above the compulsive instinct of ordinary habits.

The best way to get rid of habits is to will them out of your mind at once. Do not linger over them, lest your resolve weaken. Wisdom is your salvation from habits.

With wisdom comes such power of conviction that you don't need habits to lean on to do the right thing you should do. As soon as you are convinced of the wisdom of doing a thing, nothing should be able to turn you away from doing it. But you have to be guided by wisdom. You can install habits at will by the power of wisdom. I can make myself like anything that wisdom demands. (...) Wisdom keeps the mind plastic. That is freedom.

Wisdom is the soul's intuitive, direct knowledge of truth. (...) Your will should always be guided by wisdom. (...) Without wisdom, will becomes habit-bound.

It is impossible to say what you really like and don't like, because your inclinations are always changing. If you analyze yourself, you will see that in the matter of likes and dislikes, we are all crazy. We don't know why we like certain things and don't like others.

To be guided by wisdom is to be the king of the world.

Everything in life tempts you away from God.

First thing must come first. When you awaken in the morning, meditate. If you don't, the whole world will crowd in to claim you, and you will forget God. At night, meditate before sleep claims you. I am so strongly established in the habit of meditation that even after I lie down to sleep at night, I find I am meditating. I can't sleep in the ordinary way. The habit of being with God comes first.

Will power means freedom. Will power means Heaven. If you don't permit your will to be weakened by the attractions of the world, you will reach your divine goal.

Choose a good, wholesome, constructive goal and then determine that you are going to achieve it. No matter how many times you fail, keep on trying. No matter what happens, if you have unalterably resolved, 'The earth may be shattered, but I will keep on doing the best I can', you are using dynamic will, and you will succeed. That dynamic will is what makes one man rich and another man strong and another man a saint.

'Seek ye first the kingdom of God.' Use your will to know God first; then He will direct your path in life.

You are using dynamic will when day and night you whisper within, 'Lord, Lord, Lord', with the deepest desire to find Him. It is better to use your will to seek God than for anything else.

This is the kind of will power you must develop – the will power that will run the ocean dry if necessary in order to accomplish what is good, to produce communion with God. The greatest will should be used to meditate. The Lord wants us to discover our divine will and use it to find Him.

It is not profound words that will give you emancipation, but your own efforts through meditation.

God-realization is attained only by great effort on the part of the *yogi*, and by divine grace. (...) not until God has received all of the devotee's love will He come.

He who can practice mental neutrality is on the way to becoming a saint. He who lives in the bodily temple without being affected by changing sensory perceptions, remaining even-minded during pleasure and pain, cool and heat, and so on, becomes a true king among men. Having attained changelessness, he is one with the changeless Spirit.

God-realization is the most difficult state to reach.

Fulfillment of a particular desire seems necessary only if one lacks conviction that he can find perfect fulfillment in God.

Not until you feel in your consciousness the absolute importance of God will you reach Him. This is what Jesus meant when he said: 'Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.'

The Lord is the only Reality. We should always pray that no test or temptation will ever have the power to make us forget Him.

If you love Him, you will practice *Kriya* with the greatest devotion and faithfulness. Continuously seek Him through prayer and *Kriya Yoga*.

There is no reality to worldly life.

Duty to God nullifies all other duties. When you resolutely leave everything else to attain Him, then you are on the path to realization.

Wherever your heart is, there your mind is also. (...) you must love Him with all your heart. (...) love Him also with all your mind; if your thoughts are roaming as you pray, it is a mockery. Last of all, love God with all your soul. As you approach God, defeating all your temptations with the sword of wisdom, closing one by one the doors of the senses, and one by one saying good-bye to restless worldly thoughts, then you will love God with all your heart, all your mind, and all your soul.

As you develop spiritually, you see that He is your true Self, reflected in you as the soul, just as the moon can be reflected in a vessel of water; you realize that you are the pure image of Divinity. (...) you become able to break the vessel of the mortal ego; then the reflected soul image within it becomes one with the moon of Spirit.

Renunciation is not an end; it is a means to an end. The real renunciant is he who lives for God first, regardless of his outer mode of existence. To love God and conduct your life to please Him – that is what matters. When you will do that, you will know the Lord. Every noble thought in your mind brings you closer to Him. Those thoughts are like a river leading to the ocean of Spirit. Devotion is the one offering that tempts God. (...) Surrender to Him completely. And never doubt Him.

It is not what you hear that redeems you, but what you do with what you hear.

The accomplished *yogi* is awake in his infinite nature and asleep in his material nature. (...) The *yogi* is outwardly busy with his work, but inwardly keeping his attention always on the Lord.

He is not a guru who is self-proclaimed as such; he is a guru who is asked by God to bring others back to Him.

One who loves God can never take pleasure in being a teacher. He knows that God is the only Guru.

Don't yearn for human love; it will vanish. Behind human love is the spiritual love of God. Seek that. Don't pray for home or for money or for love or for friendship. Don't pray for anything in this world. Enjoy only what the Lord gives to you. All else is delusion. Man has come to earth solely to learn to know God; he is here for no other reason.

I am here to testify to the supreme importance of Spirit. Do not concentrate upon ephemeral worldly goals and human attachments. Such fanaticism takes your mind away from the Lord and your eternal Self in Him. (...) No other duty is important if it takes your thought and desire away from your duty to God; all else is illusion. To grasp this truth, I had to remove all worldly hallucinations from my brain, through meditation and the company of great masters. I want to instill this

understanding in your hearts: until you realize that God is more important than anything else, and until you spend your life in seeking to please Him, you are not spiritually evolved at all. (...) There is no way back Home if you weave around you a snare of worldly desires. (...) It is your desires that enslave you and make you think, 'I want this' or 'I want that'.

Nothing in life, not even the body, is of any value if we remain in ignorance of God. Without knowing Him, life becomes hell – a hornet's nest of troubles. There is no security in this world.

Each soul must find its way back alone. (...) Once you have found your Self in your soul, you are free.

Reform your life. Every night commune with Him; talk to Him; pray to Him sincerely. Give up the mockery of half-hearted prayer. (...) The greatest romance is with the Infinite.

This life is not real; you are laughing and crying in the greatest delusion, and it is not worth shedding tears over it. To give reality to our earth experiences is to invite untold misery. By identification of your consciousness with this world, we see it as a place of suffering.

Saints in India have trained their mind not to be dependent on externals for health and contentment. The world trains our minds in a different way. It gets us accustomed to too many things, and then we think we can't be happy without them. (...) Whenever you are attached to something, that possessiveness deepens your delusion. You will be rudely awakened one day to find that nothing belongs to you.

There is no need for you to be restless. Why allow nervous excitement to ruffle the mind?

Whatever you can truly convince the mind you can do, you can do. Since everything is made out of mind, it can be controlled by mind. As you develop more and more mental strength, ultimately you will be able to do anything.

Only your working at finding God will take you to God. So make your mightiest effort now. Practice religion every day of your life. Reserve your nights for meditation. Meditate with undivided attention. Let there be no mockery of mechanical prayer. Give your soul to God.

Faith cannot be contradicted: it is intuitive conviction of truth, and it cannot be shaken even by contrary evidence.

The mind is a perfect instrument of knowledge when you have learned to base your life on truth. Then you see everything in a clear, undistorted way, exactly as it is.

Do not seek fulfillment through material mediums, or through desires born of such contact. Seek the unconditioned, indestructible pure Bliss within yourself, and you will have found the ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Joy – God. Unlike material pleasures, this joy is not an abstract quality of mind; it is the conscious, self-born, self-expressing quality of Spirit. Seek it and be comforted forever.

The earth was created to bring souls to their divine destiny.

The world ends for us when our minds are detached. The world ends for us when we are free from desires.

The age of commandments has passed. The age of logic is here. You must look in the face of every experience with intelligent discrimination until you understand it; then you will not be deluded anymore.

Religion must be felt as a practical personal necessity.

Worldly gratification alone does not satisfy the heart; without real love, the heart will remain hollow. (...) Material success becomes empty without God.

Mind can enable you to do anything you want, but you must experiment first in little things until you fully develop that power. (...) Never discredit the effects of the mind on the body, but remember that you have to gradually train the mind until you *know* that its power works.

Man is kept hypnotized with delusion. Awaken in God to be free from delusion.

Indulgence enslaves the soul. Work with keen but unattached interest. Motive is criterion of right and wrong action. Calmness is the parent of right action. Perform all duties to please God.

Live life for God. (...) Live in the unchanging Reality.

Evil is anything that obstructs Self-realization.

Good and evil is the challenging riddle which life places sphinxlike before every intelligence. Attempting no solution, most men pay forfeit with their lives, penalty now even as in the days of Thebes. Here and there, a towering lonely figure never cries defeat. From the *maya* of duality, he plucks the cleaveless truth of unity.

I have long exercised an honest introspection, the exquisitely painful approach to wisdom. Self-scrutiny, relentless observation of one's thoughts, is a stark and shattering experience. It pulverizes the stoutest ego. But true self-analysis mathematically operates to produce seers. The way of self-expression, individual acknowledgments, results in egotists, sure of the right to their private interpretations of God and the universe. Truth humbly retires, no doubt, before such arrogant originality.

Man can understand no eternal verity until he has freed himself from pretensions. The human mind, bared to a centuried slime, is teeming with repulsive life of countless world-delusions. Struggles of the battlefields pale into insignificance here, when man first contends with inward enemies! No mortal foes these, to be overcome by harrowing array of might! Omnipresent, unrelenting, pursuing man even in sleep, subtly equipped with a miasmatic weapon, these soldiers of ignorant lusts seek to slay us all. Thoughtless is the man who buries his ideals, surrendering to the common fate. Can he seem other than impotent, wooden, ignominious?

To love both the invisible God, Repository of All Virtues, and visible man, apparently possessed of none, is often baffling! But ingenuity is equal to the maze. Inner research soon exposes a unity in all human minds – the stalwart kinship of selfish motive. In one sense at least, the brotherhood of man stands revealed. An aghast humility follows this levelling discovery. It ripens into compassion for one's fellows, blind to the healing potencies of the soul awaiting exploration.

Only the shallow man loses responsiveness to the woes of others' lives, as he sinks into the narrow suffering of his own. The one who practices a scalpel self-dissection will know an expansion of universal pity. Release is given him from the deafening demands of his ego. The love of God flowers on such soil. The creature finally turns to his Creator, if for no other reason than to ask in anguish: 'Why, Lord, why?' By ignoble whips of pain, man is driven at last into the Infinite Presence, whose beauty alone should lure him.

Bricks and mortar sing us no audible tune; the heart opens only to the human chant of being.

The ancient rishis laid down ineradicable patterns of spiritual living. Their hoary dictums suffice for this day and land. Not outmoded, not unsophisticated against the guiles of materialism, the disciplinary precepts mold India still. By millenniums, the skeptic time has validated Vedic worth. Take it for your heritage.

The restraint of concentration confers the power to hold the mind to the pursuit of truth with an infinite patience.

Saints of all religions have attained Self-realization through the concept of the Cosmic Beloved. Because the Absolute is without qualities and inconceivable, human thought and yearning have ever personalized it. This reconciliation satisfies both heart and head. *Bhakti* (devotion) and *jnana* (wisdom) are essentially one. *Prapatti*, taking refuge in God and *sharanagati*, flinging oneself on the divine compassion, are really parts of the highest knowledge. (...) Because the very nature of God is bliss, the man in attunement with Him experiences a natural boundless joy. The first of the passions of the soul and the will is joy.

You forgot God fast, now that your stomach is filled.

A master, one who has realized himself with the only present soul, not the body or the ego, perceives in all men a striking similarity. His impartiality of saints is rooted in wisdom. Masters have escaped *maya*; its alternating faces of intellect and idiocy no longer cast an influential glance. Sri Yukteswar showed no special consideration to those who happened to be powerful or accomplished; neither did he slight others for their poverty or illiteracy.

Always one with the Lord, he needed no separate time for communion. A Self-realized master has already left behind the stepping stone of meditation. The flower falls when the fruit appears.

Change yourself. Get rid of the mosquito consciousness. (...) By *ahimsa*, the master meant removal of the desire to kill. (...) This world is inconveniently arranged for a literal practice of *ahimsa*. Man may be compelled to exterminate harmful creatures. But he is not under a similar compulsion to feel anger or animosity. All forms of life have equal right to the air of *maya*. The saint who uncovers the secret of creation will be in harmony with its countless bewildering expressions. All men may approach that understanding who curb the inner passion for destruction.

Man's body is precious. It has the highest evolutionary value because of unique brain and spinal centers. These enable the advanced devotee to fully grasp and express the loftiest aspects of divinity. No lower form is so equipped. (...) The Vedas teach that wanton loss of a human body is a serious transgression against the karmic law.

You made yourself unwell. (...) You indispose yourself. (...) Invigorate yourself. (...) Really it has been your thoughts that have made you feel alternately weak and strong. (...) You have seen how your health has exactly followed your expectations. Thought is a force, even as electricity or gravitation. The human mind is a spark of the almighty consciousness of God. I could show you that whatever your powerful mind believes very intensely would instantly come to pass.

All creation is governed by law. (...) The ones which manifest in the outer universe, discoverable by scientists, are called natural laws. But there are subtler laws ruling the realms of consciousness which can be known only through the inner science of *yoga*. The hidden spiritual planes also have their natural and lawful principles of operation. It is not the physical scientist but the fully self-realized master who comprehends the true nature of matter.

"You are not here". Master interrupted himself one afternoon with this disclosure. As usual, he was keeping track of my attention with a devastating immediacy. (...) "You were not fully with me. In your mental background, you were creating three institutions. One was a sylvan retreat on a plain, another on a hilltop, a third by the ocean. (...) The subtle truths I am expounding cannot be grasped without your complete concentration."

A man of realization does not perform any miracle until he receives an inward sanction. God does not wish the secrets of his creation revealed promiscuously.

In shallow men the fish of little thoughts cause much commotion. In oceanic minds the wales of inspiration make hardly a ruffle.

Yogis teach that a disciple is spiritually magnetized by reverent contact with a master; a subtle current is generated. The devotee's undesirable habit-mechanisms in the brain are often cauterized; the groove of his worldly tendencies beneficially disturbed. Momentarily at least he may find the secret veils of *maya* lifting, and glimpse the reality of bliss.

Forget the past. (...) The vanished lives of all men are dark with many shames. Human conduct is ever unreliable until anchored in the Divine. Everything in the future will improve if you are making a spiritual effort now.

Master had always had young *chelas* in his hermitage. Their spiritual and intellectual education was his lifelong interest. (...) He directed their minds and lives with that careful discipline in which the word "disciple" is etymologically rooted.

Wisdom is the greatest cleanser. (...) The body is a treacherous friend. Give it its due, no more. (...) Pain and pleasure are transitory; endure all dualities with calmness, while trying at the same time to remove their hold. Imagination is the door through which disease as well as healing enters. Disbelieve in the reality of sickness even when you are ill; an unrecognized visitor will flee!

Those who have ferreted out the physical laws can easily investigate the science of the soul. A subtle spiritual mechanism is hidden just behind the bodily structure.

Sri Yukteswar's training cannot be described as other than drastic. A perfectionist, my guru was hypercritical of his disciples, whether in matters of moment or in the subtle nuances of behavior.

From transient teachers of my earlier life, I had imbibed a few erroneous lessons. A *chela*, I was told, need not concern himself strenuously over worldly duties; when I had neglected or carelessly performed my tasks, I was not chastised. Human nature finds such instruction very easy of assimilation. Under Master's unsparing rod, however, I soon recovered from the agreeable delusions. "So long as you breathe the free air of earth, you are under obligation to render grateful service." (...) No trifling lapse into shallowness or inconsistency escaped his rebuke. This flattening treatment was hard to endure, but my resolve was to allow Sri Yukteswar to iron out each of my psychological kinks. As he labored at this titanic transformation, I shook many times under the weight of his disciplinary hammer. (...) For every humbling blow he dealt my vanity, for every tooth in my metaphorical jaw he knocked loose with stunning aim, I am grateful beyond any facility of expression. The hard core or human egotism is hardly to be dislodged except rudely. With its departure, the Divine finds at last an

unobstructed channel. In vain It seeks to percolate through flinty hearts of selfishness.

Divine insight is painful to worldly ears; Master was not popular with superficial students. The wise, always few in number, deeply revered him.

A teacher could not spread India's message in the West without an ample fund of accommodative patience and forbearance.

Master relentlessly continued to dissect me whenever and wherever he chose. (...) "Tender inner weaknesses, revolting at mild touches of inner censure, are like diseased parts of the body, recoiling before even delicate handling." This was Sri Yukteswar's amused comment on the flighty ones. (...) His words were never wrathful, but impersonal with wisdom.

Students came, and generally went. Those who craved a path of oily sympathy and comfortable recognition did not find it at the hermitage. (...) They departed, preferring life's countless humiliations before any humility. Master's blazing rays, the open penetrating sunshine of his wisdom, were too powerful for their spiritual sickness. They sought some lesser teacher who, shading them with flattery, permitted the fitful sleep of ignorance.

When I had abandoned underlying resentment, I found a marked decrease in my chastisement. (...) In time I demolished every wall of rationalization and subconscious reservation behind which the human personality generally shields itself.

A worthy leader has the desire to serve, not to dominate.

The boy could never have fallen to these depths had he listened to me and not gone away to mix with undesirable companions. He has rejected my protection; the callous world must be his guru still.

Intelligence is rightly guided only after the mind has acknowledged the inescapability of spiritual law.

My guru mixed freely with men and women disciples, treating all as his children. Perceiving their soul equality, he showed no distinction or partiality. (...) Sri Yukteswar never avoided women or blamed women as objects of seduction. Men, he said, were also a temptation to women. I once inquired of my guru why a great ancient saint had called women "the door to hell". "A girl must have proved very troublesome to his peace of mind in his early life. Otherwise he would have denounced, not a woman, but some imperfection in his own self-control." (...) "Do not allow yourself to be thrashed by the provoking whip of a beautiful face. How can sense slaves enjoy the world? Its subtle flavors escape them while they grovel in primal mud. All nice discriminations are lost to the man of elemental lusts."

Destroy wrong desires now; otherwise they will follow you after the astral body is torn from its physical casing. Even when the flesh is weak, the mind should be constantly resistant. If temptation assails you with cruel force, overcome it by impersonal analysis and indomitable will. Every natural passion can be mastered. Conserve your powers. Be like the capacious ocean, absorbing within all the tributary rivers of the senses. Small yearnings are openings in the reservoir of your inner peace, permitting healing waters to be wasted in the desert soil of materialism. The forceful activating impulse of wrong desire is the greatest enemy to the happiness of man. Roam in the world as a lion of self-control.

The devotee is finally freed from all instinctive compulsions. He transforms his need for human affection into aspiration for God alone.

The monastic regulations do not allow a *swami* to retain connection with worldly ties after their formal severance. (...) The *shastric* prohibitions were intended to help *swamis* overcome narrow identifications. Shankara and Sri Yukteswar had wholly merged their beings in the Impersonal Spirit; they needed no rescue by rule.

Do not confuse understanding with a larger vocabulary. Sacred writings are beneficial in stimulating desire for inward realization, if one *stanza* at a time is slowly assimilated. Continual intellectual study results in vanity and the false satisfaction of an undigested knowledge. (...) If one busies himself with an outer display of scriptural wealth, what time is left for silent inward diving after the priceless pearls? (...) Master discouraged any tendency a student might have to construe book-knowledge as a necessary step to spiritual realization. "The rishis wrote in one sentence profundities that commentating scholars busy themselves over for generations. Endless literary controversy is for sluggard minds."

There are always those in this world who, in Browning's words, "endure no light, being themselves obscure."

Forget the outer symbols of renunciation which may injure you by inducing a false pride. Nothing matters except your steady daily spiritual advancement. For that, use *kriya yoga*.

What one does not trouble to find within will not be discovered by transporting the body hither and yon. As soon as the devotee is willing to go even to the ends of the earth for spiritual enlightenment, his guru appears near-by.

Are you able to have a little room where you can close the door and be alone? (...) That is your cave. (...) That is your sacred mountain. That is where you will find the kingdom of God.

I do not expect anything from others, so their actions cannot be in opposition with wishes of mine. I would not use others for my own happiness.

I know how you are meditating, with your mind distributed like leaves in a storm!

You must not get overdrunk with ecstasy. Much work yet remains for you in the world. (...) Master was teaching me the secret of balanced living. The soul must stretch over the cosmogonic abysses, while the body performs its daily duties. (...) It is the Spirit of God that actively sustains every form and force in the universe; yet He is transcendental and aloof in the blissful uncreated void beyond the words of vibratory phenomena. (...) Saints who realize their divinity even while in the flesh know a similar twofold existence. Conscientiously engaging in earthly work, they yet remain immersed in an awkward beatitude. The Lord has created all men from the limitless joy of His being. Though they are painfully cramped by the body, God nevertheless expects that souls made in His image shall ultimately rise above all sense identification and reunite with Him.

The cosmic vision left many permanent lessons. By daily stilling my thoughts, I could win release from the delusive conviction that my body was a mass of flesh and bones, traversing the hard soil of matter. The breath and the restless mind, I saw, were like storms which lashed the ocean of light into waves of material forms. (...) No perception of the Infinite as One Light could be had except by calming those storms. As often as I silenced the two natural tumults, I beheld the multitudinous waves of creation melt into one lucent sea, even as the waves of the ocean, their tempests subsiding, serenely dissolve into unity.

The master bestows the divine experience of cosmic consciousness when his disciple, by meditation, has strengthened his mind to a degree where the vast vistas would not overwhelm him. The experience can never be given through one's mere intellectual willingness or open-mindedness. Only adequate enlargement by *yoga* practice and devotional *bhakti* can prepare the mind to absorb the liberating shock of omnipresence. It comes with a natural inevitability to the sincere devotee. His intense craving begins to pull at God with an irresistible force. The Lord, as the Cosmic Vision, is drawn by the seeker's magnetic ardor into his range of consciousness.

Spiritual advancement is not measured by one's outward powers, but only by the depth of his bliss in meditation. Ever-new joy is God. He is inexhaustible; as you continue your meditations during the years, He will beguile you with an infinite ingenuity. Devotees like yourself who have found the way to God never dream of exchanging Him for any other happiness; He is seductive beyond thought of competition. How quickly we weary of earthly pleasures! Desire for material things is endless; man is never satisfied completely, and pursues one goal after another. The 'something else' he seeks is the Lord, who alone can grant lasting joy. Outside longings drive us from the Eden within; they offer false pleasures which only impersonate soul-happiness. The lost paradise is quickly regained through divine meditation.

After the mind has been cleared by *Kriya Yoga* of sensory obstacles, meditation furnishes a twofold proof of God. Ever-new joy is evidence of His existence, convincing to our very atoms. Also, in meditation one finds His instant guidance, His adequate response to every difficulty. (...) Human life is beset with sorrow until we know how to tune in with the Divine Will, whose 'right course' is often baffling to the egoistic intelligence. God bears the burden of the cosmos; He alone can give unerring counsel.

Intuition is soul guidance, appearing naturally in man during those instants when his mind is calm. Nearly everyone has had the experience of an inexplicably correct "hunch", or has transferred his thoughts effectively to another person. The human mind, free from the static of restlessness, can perform through its antenna of intuition all the functions of a complicated radio mechanism – sending and receiving thoughts, and tuning out undesirable ones. As the power of a radio depends on the amount of electrical current it can utilize, so the human radio is energized according to the power of will possessed by each individual. All thoughts vibrate eternally in the cosmos. By deep concentration, a master is able to detect the thoughts of any mind, living or dead. Thoughts are universally and not individually rooted; a truth cannot be created, but only perceived. The erroneous thoughts of man result from imperfections in his discernment. The goal of *yoga* science is to calm the mind, that without distortion it may mirror the divine vision in the universe.

The Lord responds to all and works for all. He fulfills any sincere desire of the devotee. Seldom do men realize how often God heeds their prayers. He is not partial to a few, but listens to everyone who approaches Him trustingly. His children should ever have implicit faith in the loving-kindness of their Omnipresent Father.

Man, in his human aspect, has to combat two sets of forces – first, the tumults within his being (...); second, the outer disintegrating powers of nature. So long as man struggles with his mortality, he is affected by the myriad mutations of heaven and earth.

A child is born on that day and at that hour when the celestial rays are in mathematical harmony with his individual *karma*. His horoscope is a challenging portrait, revealing his unalterable past and its probable future. But the natal chart can be rightly interpreted only by men of intuitive wisdom: these are few. The message boldly blazoned across the heavens at the moment of birth is not meant to emphasize fate – the result of past good and evil – but to arouse man's will to escape from his universal thralldom. What he has done, he can undo. None other than himself was the instigator of the causes of whatever effects are now prevalent in his life. He can overcome any limitation, because he created it by his own actions in the first place, and because he has spiritual resources which are not subject to planetary pressure.

The wise man defeats his planets – which is to say, his past – by transferring his allegiance from the creation to the Creator. The more he realizes his unity with Spirit, the less he can be dominated by matter. The soul is ever-free; it is deathless because birthless. It cannot be regimented by stars. Man *is* a soul and *has* a body. When he properly places his sense of identity, he leaves behind all compulsive patterns. So long as he remains confused in his ordinary state of spiritual amnesia, he will know the subtle fetters of environmental law.

God is harmony; the devotee who attunes himself will never perform any action amiss. His activities will be correctly and naturally timed to accord with astrological law. After deep prayer and meditation he is in touch with his divine consciousness; there is no greater power than inward protection. (...) All human ills arise from some transgression of universal law. (...) By a number of means – by prayer, by will power, by *yoga* meditation, by consultation with saints – the adverse effects of past wrongs can be minimized or nullified.

The deeper the self-realization of a man, the more he influences the whole universe by his subtle spiritual vibrations, and the less he himself is affected by the phenomenal flux.

The starry inscription at one's birth, I came to understand, is not that man is a puppet of his past. Its message is rather a prod to pride; the very heavens seek to arouse man's determination to be free from every limitation. God created each man as a soul, dowered with individuality, hence essential to the universal structure, whether in the temporary role of pillar or parasite. His freedom is final and immediate, if he so wills; it depends not on outer but inner victories.

Man escapes from creation's prison of duality as he awakens to consciousness of his inseverable divine unity with the Creator.

Theologians have misinterpreted Christ's words. In such passages as *I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me* (John 14:6), Jesus meant never that he was the sole Son of God, but that no man can attain the unqualified Absolute, the transcendent Father beyond creation, until he has first manifested the *Son* or activating Christ consciousness within creation. Jesus, who had achieved entire oneness with that Christ consciousness, identified himself with it inasmuch as his own ego had long since been dissolved. When Jesus said *Before Abraham was, I am* (John 8:58), the sheer essence of the words is impersonality. A form of spiritual cowardice leads many worldly people to believe comfortably that only one man was the Son of God. (...) But all men have been divinely created, and must someday obey Christ's command: *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect* (Matthew 5:48).

Man reincarnates on earth until he has consciously regained his status as a son of God.

True education can never be crammed and pumped from without; rather it must aid in bringing spontaneously to the surface the infinite boards of wisdom within.

Physical science cannot formulate laws outside of *maya*, the very texture and structure of creation. Nature herself is *maya*; natural science must perforce deal with her ineluctable quiddity. In her own domain, she is eternal and inexhaustible; future scientists can do no more than probe one aspect after another of her varied infinitude. Science thus remains in an inevitable flux, unable to reach finality.

To surmount *maya* was the task assigned to the human race by the millennial prophets. To rise above the duality of creation and perceive the unity of the Creator was conceived of as man's highest goal. Those who cling to the cosmic illusion must accept its essential law of polarity. (...) This cyclic pattern assumes a certain anguishing monotony, after man has gone through a few thousand human births; he begins to cast a hopeful eye beyond the compulsions of *maya*. To tear the veil of *maya* is to pierce the secret of creation. The *yogi* who thus denudes the universe is the only true monotheist. All others are worshipping heathen images. So long as man remains subject to the dualistic delusions of nature, the Janus-faced *Maya* is his goddess; he cannot know the one true God.

The world of illusion, *maya*, is individually called *avidya*, literally, not-knowledge, ignorance, delusion. *Maya* or *avidya* can never be destroyed through intellectual conviction or analysis, but solely through attaining the interior state of *nirbikalpa samadhi*. (...) Through the divine eye in the forehead, the *yogi* sails his consciousness into omnipresence, hearing the Word or *Aum*, divine sound or many waters or vibrations which is the sole reality of creation.

Man's mirages or reality all break down under analysis. As one by one of the reassuring props crash beneath him, man dimly perceives his idolatrous reliance, his past transgression of the divine command: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."

The consciousness of a perfected *yogi* is effortlessly identified, not with a narrow body, but with the universal structure. (...) He who knows himself as the omnipresent Spirit is subject no longer to the rigidities of a body in time and space. Their imprisoning "rings-pass-not" have yielded to the solvent "I am He".

A *yogi* who through perfect meditation has merged his consciousness with the Creator perceives the cosmical essence as light; to him there is no difference between the light rays composing water and the light rays composing land. Free from matter-consciousness, free from the three dimensions of space and the fourth dimension of time, a master transfers his body of light with equal ease over the light rays of earth, water, fire, or air. Long concentration on the liberating spiritual eye has enabled the *yogi* to destroy all delusions concerning matter and its gravitational weight; thenceforth he sees the universe as an essentially undifferentiated mass of light.

In man's dream-consciousness, where he has loosened in sleep his clutch on the egoistic limitations that daily hem him round, the omnipotence of his mind has a nightly demonstration. Lo! There in the dream stand the long-dead friends, the remotest continents, the resurrected scenes of his childhood. With that free and unconditioned consciousness, known to all men in the phenomena of dreams, the God-tuned master has forged a never-severed link. Innocent of all personal motives, and employing the will bestowed on him by the Creator, a *yogi* rearranges the light atoms of the universe to satisfy any sincere prayer of a devotee. For this purpose were man and creation made: that he should rise up as master of *maya*, knowing his dominion over the cosmos.

As steps in man's awakening, the Lord inspires man to discover, at the right time and place, the secrets of His creation. (...) Assembling the light images as he pleases, the photographer achieves optical wonders which a true master produces with actual light rays. (...) Just as the motion-picture images appear to be real, but are only combinations of light and shade, so is the universal variety a delusive seeming. The planetary spheres, with their countless forms of life, are naught but figures in a cosmic motion picture, temporarily true to five sense perceptions as the scenes are cast on the screen of man's consciousness by the infinite creative beam.

One's values are profoundly changed when one is finally convinced that creation is only a vast motion picture, and that not in it, but beyond it, lies his own reality.

The Old Testament prophets called *maya* by the name of satan, literally in Hebrew: *the adversary*. The Greek Testament, as an equivalent of satan, uses *diavolos*, or *devil*. Satan, or *maya*, is the cosmic magician who produces multiplicity of forms to hide the One Formless Verity. In God's plan and play, or *lila*, the sole function of satan or *maya* is an attempt to divert man from spirit to matter, from reality to unreality. (...) The manifestation of Christ consciousness within man's own being effortlessly destroys the illusion, or works of the devil. *Maya* is from the beginning because of its structural inherence in the phenomenal worlds. These are ever in transitional flux as antithesis to the Divine Immutability.

Seek divine wealth, not the paltry tinsel of earth. After acquiring inward treasure, you will find that outward supply is always forthcoming.

Jesus calls himself the Son of God. Though he was truly united with God, this reference has a deep impersonal significance. The Son of God is the Christ or Divine Consciousness in man. No mortal can glorify God. The only honor that man can pay his Creator is to seek Him; man cannot glorify an abstraction that he does not know. The glory or nimbus around the head of the saints is a symbolic witness of their capacity to render divine homage.

The substance of a dream is held in materialization by the subconscious thought of the dreamer. When that cohesive thought is withdrawn in wakefulness, the dream and its elements dissolve. A man closes his eyes and erects a dream – creation which, on awakening, he effortlessly dematerializes. He follows the divine archetypal pattern. Similarly, when he awakens in cosmic consciousness, he will effortlessly dematerialize the illusions of the cosmic dream.

Whoever realizes himself as a son of God can reach any goal by the infinite powers hidden within him.

Even in the world, the *yogi* who faithfully discharges his responsibilities, without personal motive or attachment, treads the sure path of enlightenment. No necessity compels you to leave the world, for inwardly you have already sundered its every karmic tie. Not of this world, you must yet be in it. (...) Liberation is dependent on inner, rather than outer, renunciation. (...) He who vows to sacrifice all in the quest of the Divine is fit to unravel the final mysteries of life through the science of meditation.

Truth is for earnest seekers, not for those of idle curiosity. (...) Supersensual truth is deserved and discovered by those who overcome their natural materialistic skepticism.

Overcoming restlessness of body and mind by concentration techniques, sitting for an hour or more in unbroken poise, the unwinking gaze directed to the spiritual eye, has achieved astonishing results.

The faithful practice of energization, concentration and meditation techniques constitutes the foundational groundwork of a higher instruction in *kriya yoga*.

One should constantly ask oneself: “Who am I?” By stern objection of all other thoughts, the devotee soon finds himself going deeper and deeper into the true Self.

Superconscious perceptions of truth are permanently real and changeless, while fleeting sense experiences and impressions are never more than temporarily or relatively true, and soon lose in memory all their vividness.

The physical *karma* or desires of man must be completely worked out before his permanent stay in astral worlds becomes possible. Two kinds of beings live in the astral spheres. Those who still have earthly *karma* to dispose of and who must therefore reinhabit a gross physical body in order to pay their karmic debts could be classified, after physical death, as temporary visitors to the astral world rather than as permanent residents. Beings with unredeemed earthly *karma* are not permitted after astral death to go to the high causal sphere of cosmic ideas, but must shuttle to and fro from the physical and astral worlds only, conscious successively of their physical body of sixteen gross elements, and of their astral body of nineteen subtle elements. After each loss of his physical body, however, an undeveloped being from the earth remains for the most part in deep stupor of the death-sleep and is hardly conscious of the beautiful astral sphere. After the

astral rest, such a man returns to the material plane for further lessons, gradually accustoming himself, through repeated journeys, to the worlds of subtle astral texture. Normal or long-established residents of the astral universe, on the other hand, are those who, freed forever from all material longings, need return no more to the gross vibrations of earth. Such beings have only astral and causal *karma* to work out. At astral death these beings pass to the infinitely finer and more delicate causal world. Shedding the thought-form of the causal body at the end of a certain span, determined by cosmic law, these advanced beings then return to Hiranyaloka or a similar high astral planet, reborn in a new astral body to work out their unredeemed astral *karma*.

Those from the earth, if they still retain vestiges of material *karma*, do not rise to the very high astral planets like Hiranyaloka. Just as most people on earth have not learned through meditation-acquired vision to appreciate the superior joys and advantages of astral life and thus, after death, desire to return to the limited, imperfect pleasures of earth, so many astral beings, during the normal disintegration of their astral bodies, fail to picture the advanced state of spiritual joy in the causal world and, dwelling on thoughts of the more gross and gaudy astral happiness, yearn to revisit the astral paradise. Heavy astral *karma* must be redeemed by such beings before they can achieve after the astral death a permanent stay in the causal thought-world, so thinly partitioned from the Creator. Only when a being has no further desires for experiences in the pleasing-to-the-eye astral cosmos, and cannot be tempted to go back there, does he remain in the causal world. Completing there the work of redeeming all causal *karma* or seeds of past desires, the confined soul thrusts out the last of the three corks of ignorance and, emerging from the final jar of the causal body, commingles with the Eternal.

The interpenetration of man's three bodies is expressed in many ways through his threefold nature. In the wakeful state on earth, a human being is conscious more or less of his three vehicles. When he is sensuously intent on tasting, smelling, touching, listening, or seeing, he is working principally through his physical body. Visualizing or willing, he is working mainly through his astral body. His causal medium finds expression when man is thinking or diving deep in introspection or meditation; the cosmical thoughts of a genius come to the man who habitually contacts his causal body. In this sense, an individual may be classified broadly as a *material man*, an *energetic man*, or an *intellectual man*. A man identifies himself about sixteen hours daily with his physical vehicle. Then he sleeps; if he dreams, he remains in his astral body, effortlessly creating any object even as do the astral beings. If man's sleep be deep and dreamless, for several hours he is able to transfer his consciousness, or sense of I-ness, to the causal body; such sleep is revivifying. A dreamer is contacting his astral and not his causal body; his sleep is not fully refreshing.

Wherever there are wars, wherever we are confronted with an opponent, conquer by love.

Man's conscious state is an awareness of body and breath. His subconscious state, active in sleep, is associated with his mental and temporary separation from body and breath. His superconscious state is the freedom from the delusion that existence depends on body and breath. (...) For the *kriya yogi*, the breath link is severed at will by scientific wisdom, not by karmic necessity. By actual experience, the *yogi* is already aware of his essential incorporeality. Life by life, each man progresses at his own pace, be it ever so erratic, toward the goal of his own apotheosis. Death simply offers man the more congenial environment of an astral world in which to purify his dross.

Death is not a blotting-out of existence, a final escape from life; nor is death the door to immortality. He who has fled his Self in earthly joys will not recapture It amidst the gossamer charms of an astral world. There he merely accumulates finer perceptions and more sensitive responses to the beautiful and the good, which are one. It is on the anvil of this gross earth that struggle man must, hammer out the imperishable gold of spiritual identity. Bearing in his hand the hard-won golden treasure as the sole acceptable gift to death, a human being wins final freedom from the rounds of physical reincarnation.

He who sincerely yearns for wisdom is content to start his search by humbly mastering a few simple ABCs of the divine schema, not demanding prematurely a precise mathematical graph of life's "Einstein theory".

The threefold nature of God as He demonstrates Himself in the phenomenal worlds is symbolized in Hindu scriptures as Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, and Shiva the Destroyer-Renovator. Their triune activities are ceaselessly displayed throughout vibratory creation. As the Absolute is beyond the conceptual powers of man, the devout Hindu worships It in the august embodiments of the Trinity. The universal creative-preservative-destructive aspect of God, however, is not His ultimate or even His essential nature. His intrinsicality cannot be grasped. The final nature of the Lord is known only when "the Son ascends to the Father". The liberated man overpasses the vibratory realms and enters the Vibrationless Original.

The final mysteries of God are not open to discussion. The Lord alone is the teacher.

A child of God bears witness *by his life*. (...) For man, Truth is unshakable knowledge of his real nature, his Self as soul. (...) The full Truth is realizable by every devotee of God who strives manfully to repossess his divine heritage.

Self-Realization Fellowship – Kriya Yoga

The real meaning of any scripture can be known only through direct experience. That inner knowledge is accessible to all men who attain soul-perception or Self-realization.

You realize a spiritual fellowship with other truth seekers on this path, and the supreme joy of satsang, fellowship with God. You will erase forever all doubts as to the existence, nature, and power of God.

When a student tunes in with the wisdom of a God-sent guru-preceptor, then by his efforts to follow the guru's teaching, and by the inner guidance he receives from the guru, that student can find liberation. Those who are steadfast will ultimately be lifted into the kingdom of Cosmic Consciousness.

Students who knock at the door of spiritual opportunity with their best efforts will find it swinging open, for God does indeed "help those who help themselves". As soon as a devotee begins to understand the Ultimate Reality that sustains all beings, he cries in joy: "Lord, nothing that I ever sought in the world is as wonderful as Thou art; Thou, the giver of all gifts."

Attuning the limited human consciousness to God's will is not otherworldly, but practical. Have a partnership with the Lord in all your undertakings. Without God's support man inevitably fails; because strength and wisdom for success in the battle of life come from the Infinite Source. Ignoring God, man cuts his own lifeline. Those persons are closest to unraveling the mystery of life who are consciously seeking communion with God, the First Cause.

SRF teaches the highest principle of spiritual living: meditation combined with activity. Everywhere people are working, but they have forgotten God. First meditate and feel the divine Presence; then do your work saturated with the consciousness of God. If you do this, you will never be tired. If you work for your Divine Beloved, your life will be filled with love and strength. SRF students are taught how to dedicate inwardly to God all the day's activities; and, when work is done, to commune with Him in the temple of silence.

Spirituality cannot be taught in the marketplace. God must be earnestly sought. When you are very desirous of finding Him, the Lord sends a guru. The guru has only one purpose: to introduce you to the Heavenly Father.

An SRF student should never go to bed without first giving his deepest attention to God.

SRF teaches control of the body until one is its master. Make your body a fit temple to receive God. The human body has to be made ready to receive the divine power.

The Lord may not respond right away. Only when He is convinced that you seek Him not for the satisfaction of temporal desires or for spiritual glamour and glory – but simply to be His, unconditionally, forever – will He open the door. (...) to those who make no demand, who have resolute desire, who just keep on striving, saying “Lord, I will wait for you, no matter how long it takes”, He will come.

God is the only eternal relative. No one belongs to another person.

Salvation is for men and women who love God, those who go on seeking Him to the end – not just to “stick it out”, but because they love Him.

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God” was Jesus’ advice to all people. Man was not made merely for worldly life. Millions of persons have thought worldly goals to be sufficient, but they were mistaken. At death they left this world, bewildered and dissatisfied, their soul hunger unappeased.

No one should call himself a sinner. (...) The greatest sin is your ignorance of your oneness with Him.

Volition is the dynamo that feeds all our powers. It initiates and keeps in continuous operation all our physical, mental, and spiritual actions. Without the spring of volition, we cannot walk, talk, think, work, or feel. In order not to exercise volition, or will power, one would have to lie down and enter a state of suspended animation. Even the slightest movement of the muscles (as in winking the eyelids) or any act of thinking is initiated by the use of volition.

A *wish* implies a helpless desire of the mind. A *desire* is a stronger wish; it is often followed by fitful efforts to manifest itself into action. An *intention*, or a determination, is a definite, strong desire expressed very forcefully once or twice through action for the accomplishment of a certain purpose. Such a determination, however strong, is often discouraged after one or perhaps several unsuccessful efforts. But a *volition* consists of a series of continuous, undiscourageable, unceasing determinations and acts revolving around a desire, until it becomes dynamic enough to produce the much-craved result. “Will and act until victory” is the slogan of all volitive action. No matter how impossible of accomplishment his goal may seem, the man of volition never stops repeating conscious acts of determination to achieve it, as long as he lives.

Does not will power govern evolution? Coercion or compulsion never brings about growth. It is freedom that accelerates evolution. Too much dependence upon what is external or objective throttles the possibility of progress and nips in the bud the potent factors of evolution. Progress presupposes the existence of the power of growth from within; and that a subject will evolve by adjusting itself to its environment, or by adapting its environment to itself. Unless he trains his will by application of scientific techniques, man’s power of volition atrophies.

The use of will power developed by the practice of SRF methods opens up limitless possibilities for all-round success. We must will to move or think. And we are almost continuously moving some part of the body and thinking. Therefore the determined direction of physical activities and thought force by a developed, consciously exercised will power, can accomplish many things that might be considered impossible. Using the will does not necessitate physical or mental strain. Exertion of conscious will means a cool, calm, determined, increasingly steady and smooth-flowing effort of the attention and the whole being toward attaining a definite goal.

The *yogis* of India have a large number of postures that they practice in order to strengthen and develop their will power. The will can be utilized to develop the body; and the will itself is developed in the process by the very exercising of it. Physical and mental development are intertwined, and help each other. The SRF technique of recharging the body by will is distinctive in that it teaches one how to concentrate his attention upon the inner energy – direct giver of strength and vitality to all the tissues in the body. The faithful student will find that practice of the technique invariably and consciously develops his will power along with his bodily strength.

Will is termed blind if it is not purposively guided by wisdom. Man is attached to all five senses, and he must watch his step if he would save himself from his blind will. Realizing the futility of blind will – after experiencing its results – the youth learns what is meant by “thinking will”. Even thinking will, however, is not an end in itself, for unless it is guided by discrimination, it becomes semiparalysed by wrong activities. But if one’s thinking will retains its normal power and is made to revolve around a definite purpose, it becomes “dynamic volition”. When such volition is used for wholesome purposes – actions in tune with the universal harmony or good – the will is strengthened and leads to success. A wrongly used will weakens itself, owing to lack of encouragement from truth, as it is out of tune with the universal order. When one knows that his objective or the nature of his purpose is worthwhile, then the tenacity of his volition becomes greater. The man of volition says: “I will use my dynamic power of volition to fight for the truth until success comes. If death intervenes, I shall take up my activity with renewed determination in another incarnation, until I have fulfilled my good purpose.”

A strong will, by its own dynamic force, creates a way for fulfillment of its intention. By its very strength, the will sets into motion certain vibrations in the atmosphere; and nature, with its laws of order, system, and efficiency, thereupon responds by creating favorable circumstances. Will derives its greatest strength from an honest purpose, lofty motives, and a noble solicitude for doing good to the world at large. A strong will is never stifled; it always finds a way.

God’s will is guided by wisdom, not by whim or temptation. God made us, his children, in His image, that we might guide our will with wisdom, even as He does. To teach people not to use their will is not only a ridiculous denial of the Divine Father’s wish; indeed, it is an impossibility, since the will is involved in even the slightest movement of the muscles or in thinking.

All human craving and desire should be transmuted and turned toward God, instead of being allowed to delude the soul-image of God in man. Temptation is a delusive, compelling, conflicting, joy-expecting thought which should be used to pursue happiness-making truth and not misery-producing error. Although God is the Creator of consciousness, the vitiated consciousness in man turns away from Him and tries to lure the soul to concentrate upon temporary pleasures of the senses.

When you want to accomplish something important, will and act after you have first contacted God. By contacting God first, you harness your will and activity to the right goal. As you cannot broadcast through a broken microphone, so must you remember that you cannot broadcast your prayers through a mental microphone that is disordered by restlessness. Repair your mind microphone by practicing deep calmness. Then give God a real soul-call. Do not give up after only one or two broadcasts if He does not seem to respond. Similarly, it is ineffective to pray once and then let the attention run away. Continuously broadcast your prayer to God through your calm mental microphone until you hear his answering voice. Most people pray in restlessness, and without the determination to receive a response.

If one uses his will ignorantly, it produces wrong or evil actions. But if one guides his will with wisdom, his actions bring about good, for they are in tune with divine will, and divine will is guided by wisdom. Wisdom-guided, self-initiated human will, and human will guided by God's wisdom-guided will, are one and the same thing: "Oh my Father, Thy will be done."

The only savior of man is a constantly progressive dynamic will. (...) When by deep meditation and wisdom-guided, unflinching, never discouraged determination we can successfully keep our volition revolving around all our noble desires, then our will becomes one with divine will. Man's will ordinarily works within the boundaries of his own little circle of family, environment, world conditions, destiny, and prenatal and postnatal cause-and-effect governed actions. But divine dynamic volition can change destiny, wake the dead, move mountains into the sea, and divert the course of planets. For absolute control of your life and for destroying prenatal and postnatal root-causes of failure, you must exercise your will in every undertaking, until it shakes off its mortal delusion of being human will and becomes all-powerful divine will. You do not need to acquire this dynamic will. You already possess it in the image of God within you.

Real students are satisfied only when they can realize truth within themselves as a direct, personal experience.

Meditation is the science of reuniting the soul with Spirit. The soul, descending from God into flesh, manifests its consciousness and life force through seven *chakras*, or centers of light, in man's cerebrospinal axis. Encased in the bodily prison, the soul consciousness and life force become identified with the physical vehicle and its mortal limitations. Scientific meditation awakens the soul consciousness in the seven cerebrospinal centers. In a state of divine

recollectedness, the soul intuitively realizes its immortal nature and origin. The various progressive states of soul awakening are accompanied by an ever increasing accession of inner peace and joy. In the most exalted states, soul and Spirit become reunited in ecstatic, blissful communion, or *samadhi*.

By meditation, then, we reconnect the little joy of the soul with the vast joy of the Spirit. Meditation should not be confused with ordinary concentration. Concentration consists in freeing the attention from distractions and in focusing it on any thought in which one may be interested. Meditation is that special form of concentration in which the attention has been liberated from restlessness and is focused on God. Meditation is concentration used to know God.

One of the first requisites for meditation is correct posture. The spine should be erect.

Visualization is not realization; but visualization is an effective aid in deepening one's concentration, which is essential for the deep meditation that yields realization.

Scientific techniques will enable you to dive ever more deeply in the great ocean of God's presence. We all exist at this very moment in that ocean of Spirit; but only by steadfast, devoted, scientific meditation may we consciously perceive that we are individualized soul waves on the vast ocean of God's bliss.

The meditation period should last at least thirty minutes in the morning and thirty minutes at night. (...) Carry into your daily activities the calmness you feel in meditation; that calmness will help you to bring harmony and happiness into every department of your life.

It is not necessary to know and love all human beings and other creatures personally and intimately. (...) Be inclusive. Brightly reflect the light of God's love.

Always remember that you need the inspiration of better company – of those more highly evolved than yourself – to keep constantly improving. And you should also share your own goodness with people of inferior qualities who need your help.

The body's living cells are created and energized internally by thoughts and by biological forces. From an inner spiritual source the various chemical, molecular, atomic, and other motions of the bodily cells are constantly flooded with subtler rejuvenating motions of consciousness, subconsciousness, superconsciousness, Christ Consciousness, and Cosmic Consciousness. The vital sparks of intelligent energy that constitute life are but condensed thought of God. Without these vital sparks of life, the external sources of bodily energy are of no avail in maintaining life in the body.

The importance of depending more and more upon the limitless supply of energy available from the inner source of Cosmic Consciousness, and less upon other sources of bodily energy, now becomes clear. Healthful food is necessary, but eating all the time will only make the body grow old more quickly. The only way to keep the body really rejuvenated is to unite human consciousness and Cosmic Consciousness through meditation. Avoid any suggestion to the mind of human limitations. Instead one should constantly impress the mind with truth.

Food alone does not support life. (...) The power that creates life, that enables the body to convert food and air into energy – that is the direct source of life.

The path to Self-realization is made much easier if the imperfections of the body are eliminated and if the operation of its functions are so harmoniously arranged that the mind need not at any time be interrupted in meditation because of the demands of the physical body.

So long as it dwells on the material plane, human consciousness cannot encompass the universal Christ Consciousness, no matter how desirous it may be of doing so. By practice of scientific concentration and meditation techniques, the sincere student can increase and refine the Christ Consciousness universally present in every atom of creation.

Self-realization means knowledge of one's own soul and of its oneness with the Father. (...) By intuitive Self-realization, or knowledge of his own soul, man becomes aware of his oneness with the Christ Consciousness.

The waves of protons, electrons, etc. are manifestations of vaster oceans of vital force. The vital force (or life energy) is a manifestation of the measureless powers of all forms of subconscious, superconscious, Christ Consciousness, and Cosmic Consciousness.

Concentration on the muscles, as in the practice of mechanical physical exercises, tends to make one think of himself as a physical being only. SRF instructions teach the science of concentrating on the inner life energy and will power and thus awakening one's consciousness of his subtle spiritual nature. Strength comes from within, not from the muscles. Life is sustained from the powers within; it does not depend solely upon food or exercise.

SRF instructions teach one to spiritualize the body – to perceive it as a reflection of Spirit and to think of oneself as the divine life energy that sustains the body, rather than as a mere physical vehicle consisting of bones and muscles of a certain volume and weight.

Energy can be made to permeate the body by tension, and it can be withdrawn by relaxation. Life energy is expended in all processes of thought, feeling, and physical activity. SRF techniques replenish the energy by tapping the source. (...) By keeping in touch with the Cosmic Source of life energy, it is possible to work without fatigue.

All our limbs and muscles are moved by the exercise of will and life energy. The flow of life energy into the sensory nerves is caused by divine will and our own will together; the flow of life energy into the motor nerves is caused by our own will. Always remember: The greater the exertion of the will, the greater the flow of life energy into a particular body part.

Most physical culture systems are mechanical and do not take into account the foregoing facts. Exercises that make use only of the unconscious mechanical will are merely “muscle bumping”. Such exercises do not cause a sufficient flow of life energy into the muscles and tissues to be more than temporarily beneficial. By following the teachings of SRF, you can learn to vitalize every body cell.

Relaxation means the release of the energy and consciousness that have been employed either by the body as a whole or by some of its parts during mental or physical activity. Man receives sensations coming from outside stimulation through his eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin surface by means of impulses that travel through the sensory nerves. He responds to sensations by sending energy out through the motor nerves, which causes tension or contraction of the muscles.

An act of will produces actual energy in a body part and, in so doing, produces tension (i.e. contraction of the muscles) in that part. In tensing or energizing the arm, or any body part, with will, one produces energy in that particular body part purely by the power of consciousness or will. (...) By energizing through tension, the great link between consciousness, will and the body is found. (...) This shows that consciousness (will) is the prime factor in creating changes in the flow of energy to muscles or to any body parts. Also, in lifting weights by will power, the important relation between will and energy is found.

The motion or energy or life force within you is that which heals. The only purpose of external physical methods is to rouse this life energy. SRF lessons teach you how to rouse by will the life energy that creates every part, every organ of the body. The link between the mind and flesh is supplied by the life force. By will power, you can contact that dynamic power. SRF lessons teach you how to contact Cosmic Life; when you are attuned to the Cosmic Life, you will never tire, because you will feel, beneath your energy, the ocean of God’s cosmic energy. The greatest method is to tap that energy directly from the inner source and not through the artificial stimuli of medicines, emotion and so on.

All true scriptures have a threefold meaning, because they are intended to benefit mankind on the three planes of human existence: the material, the mental and the spiritual. (...) A body that is relaxed and calm conduces to mental peace, which is necessary for meditation, the spiritual art of communing with God. (...) By reducing the amount of energy expended in restless muscular and mental activity, relaxation frees energy to be used for the highest and most constructive purpose: concentration on the Divine Indweller.

You have attained mental relaxation when you can control the flow of thought for any length of time desired; and when you can at will free the consciousness from awareness of the body, and at will resume body consciousness. When you can remain calm at all times in spite of severe trials, and when you are secure in undying faith in God and guru, you are truly mentally relaxed. (...) Peace and calm concentration are attributes of man's soul, of his true nature.

Too often, we write out checks of energy and do not replace energy funds. If we write out checks and keep on putting money in the bank, our account will always show a balance in our favor, and we will not miss what we spend. But if we keep on writing checks and do not deposit more funds in our bank account, it will soon be overdrawn. So it is with the body. If we write out checks of energy and do not put back any more energy, we will become weak. But if we replenish our bodies with energy, we will never feel tired. Nothing can heal but life force. The whole purpose of true exercise is to awaken the inner source of energy which we have ignored throughout our lives.

Food contains a limited amount of energy; hence the body can extract from it some strength. But if the internal bodily supply of life energy is exhausted, food is of no use. (...) Therefore we should daily apply scientific methods of recharging the body with energy from the inexhaustible inner source.

The greater the concentration of will, the greater the flow of energy to a particular body part. (...) In order to tense, one must first be relaxed. (...) Each exercise should be performed with deepest attention and will power.

Mastery in mental relaxation comes with faithful practice in freeing the mind of all thoughts at will and then keeping the attention fixed on the peace and contentment within.

The devotee who aspires to develop uniformly and steadily in spirituality should always calm the mind with the practice of concentration, keep the breath quiet by proper breathing exercises, preserve the vital essence by self-control, avoid temptation by mixing only with good company, and keep the body quiet and not in perpetual motion and restlessness.

Everyone needs to let go of his thoughts and enter into absolute silence every morning and night.

Just as there are degrees of physical relaxation, so there are degrees of mental and metaphysical relaxation. The term metaphysical is used here to indicate those states which go beyond the physical and mental realms. Metaphysical relaxation consists in freeing the human consciousness entirely from its identification with the physical body, money, possessions, name, fame, family, country, the world, and the human race and its habits. Metaphysical relaxation means disengaging your attention by degrees from consciousness, subconsciousness, the semisuperconscious state felt after meditation, and Christ Consciousness; and in identifying yourself completely with Cosmic Consciousness. Metaphysical relaxation therefore consists in releasing

consciousness from the delusion of duality and truly resting the mind by keeping it identified with one's own real nature: unity with Spirit. Man has hypnotized himself into thinking that he is a human being, whereas in reality he is one with God.

After one has learned how to concentrate and how to energize the body, he will be able to withdraw energy from the body and to consciously direct it toward the higher centers in the spine and brain where awareness of God's presence may be realized.

The temple of God is within your soul. Enter into this quietness and sit there in meditation. (...) You must always be guided by that divine power, which is unfailing.

God froze His thoughts into substance, and by *maya* or cosmic illusion He causes us to perceive His dreams of the cosmos, with its various sensations, as tangible and real. It is *maya* that keeps us from realizing that the universe is constructed of mind stuff and that it has no more reality than do our dreams, which we recognize, upon awakening from them, as creations of our minds. God has given the soul and mind the power to materialize thoughts in the dreamland; to create, in the same way that He does, a miniature cosmos. The phenomena of dreams show that we employ the instrument of the mind to reproduce an exact and realistic copy of this world and of the experiences of mundane life. God is showing us, in our dreams, that we, being His children, can create substance out of thought, even as He does. In the dreamland, the soul becomes free to create a cosmos after its own fancy. (...) Here the soul can create, if it will, a perfect world. Just as we find this variety-filled dream life interesting, without believing in its actuality, so we must prove ourselves to be God's immortal children, who can learn from and be entertained by the cosmic movies, without forgetting that they are temporary and delusive. We must prove ourselves to be true sons of God by appreciating the lessons of the cosmic movies without losing the unchangeable joyous poise of our inner beings, our souls, which are true reflections of immortal, unchangeable God.

All dreams have some significance. Meaningless dreams are reflections of disordered, purposeless thinking. In fact, all dreams signify the state of one's consciousness.

Resurrect yourself from the consciousness of useless human habits and changing human thoughts. Live every second in the consciousness that you are immortal: thoughts and habits change; only your soul will live forever. Quicken your understanding, quicken your efforts, so that you will not keep the ever new bliss of your soul buried under temporary false satisfactions. (...) Resurrect your soul from dreams of frailties. Resurrect your soul in eternal wisdom. Meditation is the greatest way of resurrecting your soul from the bondage of the body and from all your trials. (...) You can unleash infinite powers and shatter your finite trials. Resurrect yourself from weakness, ignorance, consciousness of disease, and above all, from the clutches of undesirable habits that beset your life. Neither the dream of life nor the dream of death is lasting.

You are deluded into thinking that you are awake when you are still dreaming. This delusive sleeping and waking in dreams will continue until man knows that he can really awaken only in God.

Many students on the spiritual path, striving to go from the conscious to the superconscious state, become sidetracked in the subconscious. They get caught in the movieland of dreams, and become satisfied. As you take your attention away from the motion picture of sensory experiences, do not lose yourself in the movieland of dreams. Pass by and race toward the Infinite Spirit.

Concentrate well on the duties you are performing, but always, in the background of your mind, hum a silent devotional song of love to your beloved Heavenly Father.

It is important to differentiate between your needs and wants. Your needs are few, while your wants can be limitless. In order to find freedom and bliss, minister only to your needs. Stop creating limitless wants and pursuing the will-o'-the-wisp of false happiness. The more you depend upon conditions outside yourself for happiness, the less happiness you will experience. (...) The unchangeable, immortal soul is hidden behind the screen of your consciousness, on which are painted at various times various pictures. Lift the veil of illusive change and be established in your immortal nature. Enthroned your fickle consciousness on the changelessness and calmness within you, which is the throne of God; then let your soul manifest bliss night and day.

Desirelessness is not a negation of joy, but the finding of fulfillment of all desires in the all-satisfying joy of God.

Play all your parts, whether they are tragic or comic, always remembering that your real nature is eternal bliss, nothing else.

Whatever conception we have of God, if it does not influence our daily conduct, if our everyday life does not find an inspiration from it, and if it is not found to be universally necessary, then that conception is useless. If God is not conceived in such a way that we cannot do without Him in the doing of the most trifling or the highest duties, then it is plain that we have not felt any connection between God and life.

We cannot have full or direct knowledge of God through the limited powers of the intellect, which give only a partial and indirect view of things. To view a thing intellectually is to view it by being apart from it. *Intuition* is the direct grasp of truth, seeing it by being one with it. It is by intuition that God consciousness is realized.

It must be remembered that to seek God does not give us any excuse to neglect the various physical, mental, and spiritual battles of life. On the other hand, the climbing spiritual aspirant must learn to conquer moods, habits, and so on, in order to free the temple of life from the darkness of ignorance and the weakness of disease, so that God's presence may be perceived. God cannot be perceived

while the darkness of ignorance, overpowering disease or mental inharmony prevails.

To know God is to love Him. Knowledge of God precedes the ability to love Him.

Any escape from problems, physical or mental, is an escape from life, as there can be no life that is not full of problems. Essentially, conditions are neither good nor bad; they are always neutral, seeming to be either depressing or encouraging because of the sad or bright attitude of the mind of the individual concerned with them. When a person mentally sinks below the level of circumstances, he surrenders himself to the influence of bad times, ill luck, and sorrow. If he rises above circumstances, all conditions of life, however dark and threatening, will be like a blanket of mist that will disappear with the warm glance of the sun. The sorrows of the ordinary person do not arise out of the conditions of life; they are not inherent in the conditions. They are born out of the weaknesses and infirmities of the human mind and the effects of human experiences.

If we do not possess qualities, we must create them in our own minds through concentration. Through concentration and meditation, we make ourselves powerful.

Be king over yourself. Always know that every day is a fresh opportunity. Meet everybody and every circumstance on the battlefield of life with the courage of a hero and the smile of a conqueror. Whatever comes your way and needs attention must be considered as a duty. Duty is not imposed upon man by some superior power. It is the inherent urge of life toward progression; therefore, duty is action that needs care. Neglect of duty is a source of evil that can be avoided by wisdom.

Most people live almost mechanically, unconscious of any ideal or plan of life. They come on earth, struggle for a living, then leave the shores of mortality without knowing why they came here or what their duties really were. (...) Do not wander aimlessly, lost in the jungle of life, your happiness continuously bleeding away from thorn pricks of new desires. You must determine the goal of life, and find the shortest road that can lead you there. Do not travel unknown roads, picking up new troubles.

The man of powerful concentration should ask God to direct his focused mind to the right place for success that is rightfully his.

There is a way to overcome the unfavorable results of past actions. The causes of failures must be destroyed and a new cause for success set in motion. (...) Feel the presence of God first; then use your will and act. (...) God is the secret source of all mental power, peace and prosperity. (...) By visualizing prosperity or by affirmation, you may strengthen your subconscious mind, which in turn may encourage your conscious mind; but that is all that visualization alone can do. The conscious mind alone cannot initiate a new cause that will bring positive success in any direction; but when the human mind attunes itself to God, in the state of superconsciousness, it can be sure of success; for the superconscious

mind is in tune with the unlimited power of God, and is therefore able to create a new cause of success. (...) The omnipresent Father knows all the needs of a true son.

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all things shall be added unto you.” When you seek success by the material way, you are governed by the law of cause and effect, but when you have communion with God first, then success is given to you in innumerable ways both subtle and material. (...) Success must always come from God. The world can give you just so much and no more. Go to the Source of life, without whose power you cannot live.

The conscious ego state is marked by restlessness and attachment.

You have to resurrect your consciousness from the environment of ignorance into the light of eternal wisdom. (...) Even in crucifixion Jesus could keep his loving attitude and say: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” So must you forgive your trials. (...) What is the method? Meditation, exercise, relaxation, self-control, right diet, fortitude, and an undaunted attitude of mind. You have unlimited power; you must cultivate that power, that is all.

When you receive, or realize by meditation the omnipresence of God, you can develop your mental powers by serious application. Your mental powers will then expand and your cup of realization will be big enough to hold the ocean of knowledge.

Man’s attachment to matter keeps the soul confined to the body prison and prevents it from finding freedom in God, in the realm of eternal bliss. The ego attempts to satisfy through material channels the soul’s constant, insatiable longing for God. Ego-driven sense gratification only increases man’s misery. The soul’s hunger can never be appeased by indulging the senses. When man realizes this and masters his ego – that is, when he achieves self-control – life becomes glorified by God while man is still in the flesh. Then, instead of being enslaved by material desires and appetites, his attention is transferred to the heart of Omnipresence.

He who makes it his business to have communion with God first will find imperishable inner happiness as well as outer material comforts. We must not be too busy to try to realize the presence of God.

People who are slaves to the senses find that their evil habits compel them to do things which will hurt them. Stubborn bad habits bludgeon your will power every time it tries to take the lead and guide your thoughts to the kingdom of right action. The remedy lies in rescuing your will power from the imprisonment of the senses. (...) You must cure yourself of evil habits by cauterizing them with the opposite good habits. Don’t let unhealthful ideas float down the stream of your habit-forming thoughts.

Habits of thought are mental magnets that attract specific things relative to their kind and quality. Material habits will always bring material results, and spiritual habits attract spiritual results.

It takes from five to eight years to substitute a good habit for a strong bad habit. Until the strong good habit is formed, one should stay away from his former evil habit-forming environment or actions.

Concentration is focusing the mind through interest and determination on any line of thought. Concentration consists of the art of focusing one hundred percent attention upon one thing at a time. Meditation is the application of concentration solely to know God.

The primary factor in concentration consists in withdrawing the attention from all diverting objects. An inner environment of mental calmness despite outer distractions is the best altar for concentration and meditation.

To seek God does not relieve one of the various physical, mental and spiritual duties which he has in this human life; nor should the search for God be used as an excuse for neglect of one's other responsibilities. In order to fulfill better his earthly duties, the climbing spiritual aspirant should learn to meditate; then he can banish dark ignorance and weakening disease from the temple of his life and perceive therein God's perfect presence.

Intensity consists in making today's meditation deeper than yesterday's meditation, and tomorrow's deeper than today's.

Scientific concentration enables you to throw your attention at will on the object of concentration and to hold it there uninterruptedly for as long as you wish. (...) Successful people have developed this power of concentration in the past, or in this life, by constant friction with difficult problems.

By the practice of meditation, man learns to throw his thought concentratedly upon God and to appeal successfully to Him to recharge his concentration with God's perfect concentration. Only then, when scientifically acquired human concentration is charged with the concentration of Spirit, can man expect to accomplish things.

Union with God is established by neutralizing the restless thought- and desire-waves of the consciousness. (...) When the technique of concentration is successfully practiced, the waves of breath cease, owing to the restfulness of the heart; then the ripples of sensations and of restless thoughts vanish from the lake of attention, and the undisturbed reflection of the soul is seen. (...) The devotee must know how to calm the senses, how to take consciousness away from them, and how to withdraw the life force from the sensory-motor nerves, which are the conductors of disturbing sensations. (...) The life force in the nerves keeps the soul entangled with messages of sensations from the eyes, ears, hands, and so forth; but when the life force is plucked from the eyes and cut off from the hands, and from all consciousness of the body, the soul's attention

becomes freed from the distracting messages of the senses. Then the soul becomes cognizant of its divine nature. Only then is a state of complete concentration reached.

No one can concentrate deeply without first disengaging his attention from outer and inner distraction. Hence a scientific technique of freeing one's attention from the objects of distraction is the only way to get results.

The Heavenly Father does not reveal Himself to those who are intellectually wise but without devotion; nor to the emotionally intoxicated, who are unable to reason clearly; but unto those who worship Him as little children, wholeheartedly and with full attention.

There are four states of consciousness. *The first state of consciousness* is marked by complete identification of the self and its well-being with the struggle for and acquirement of material and physical satisfactions. Such a person does not try to understand the power behind his brain, without which no gainful or pleasurable activity can be carried on. *The second state* is reached when a person, by occasional concentration on higher things, tries once in a while to get away from his preoccupation with the sensory world. *The third state* is reached by deeper concentration; the *yogi* arrives at a middle point wherein he enjoys glimpses of inner Bliss; his spiritual and material tendencies are now evenly matched, as a result of steady effort at concentration and of proper schooling in the habits of silent concentration. *The fourth state* comes when the consciousness becomes completely identified with the only good or God, and the *yogi* goes beyond the oppositional states of good and evil. Awakening in God, the *yogi* finds that the dual states of good and evil have vanished, just as sorrowful or joyous dream experiences of disease and health, bereavement and fulfillment vanish upon one's awakening from sleep.

The *yogi* who has gained control over his life force is then able to recognize that consciousness is the only thing that is real about his existence. By training his consciousness, the student begins to realize that his life is not dependent upon bodily functions, and that his real nature is spiritual and immortal. Thus he understands the delusive nature of ego consciousness which causes us to erroneously identify ourselves with the body instead of realizing the divine nature of our being: *satchitananda* – eternal existence (*sat*), eternal consciousness (*chit*), eternal joy (*ananda*).

Breath is the cord that ties the soul to the flesh.

Any violent or continued mental or physical excitement causes a disturbance of the balance in the flow of life force through the sensory-motor mechanism.

To be controlled by moods is to be a part of matter. If you keep your mind on the resolve never to lose your peace, you can attain godliness. Keep a secret chamber of silence and peace within yourself, where you will not let moods, trials, battles, or inharmony enter. Keep out all hatred, revengefulness, and desires. Though you must remain in the world, be not of the world.

We can never be lastingly happy until we learn to seek satisfaction in spiritual progress and to guard happiness from all the influences that tend to destroy it. Even if you attain the perfect material conditions of which you dream, happiness would not come as a result; but, through spiritual progress, you can attain inner joy even while living fully and experiencing all the moods and activities of the average life.

If the soul becomes completely engrossed in lesser pleasures, it fails to be attentive to the investigation of superior lasting pleasures. Many persons reason that renunciation of material pleasures is almost an impossibility in the world. But the average man is not advised to hide away in the jungle in order to find peace. He should learn rather to be in the world and yet not of it. He must be positive about his spiritual goal, and then take care not to so blind himself with material pleasures that he fails to continue to enjoy the vision of superior pleasures.

A man sliding down the path of evil tendencies finds no resistance; but as soon as he tries to oppose his wrong habits by following spiritual laws of self-discipline, he finds countless instinctive temptations roused to fight and frequently to foil, his noble efforts.

The will should be used, guided by wisdom. Will power was given to man for his use. It is a metaphysical error not to try to use our will, for we cannot help using our will in every moment and every act. Only when we are physically dead or mentally dead do we not use will power. When our own will is guided by true wisdom, it becomes one with the wisdom-inspired will of God. Our will and His will become one and the same thing. We should not isolate our will from God, but realize that behind the little motor of our own will throbs the Infinite Dynamo of God's endlessly powerful inexhaustible will.

A wish might be called "volition in embryo" – helpless, unformed, lacking in power. It may remain as it is without further manifestation and eventually dissolve for lack of energy. Or it may grow into desire and then determination. Even determination may become discouraged. But when determination becomes volition, it becomes all-powerful. A volition consists of a series of continuous, never-discouraged, unceasing determinations accompanied by activities revolving around a desire until it becomes dynamic enough to produce the much-craved-for result. You can utterly destroy the roots of failure in your life by exercising your will until realization comes that this dynamic will is already in your possession as the image of God within you.

Look at life unmasked. Observe the perpetual current of emotions and thoughts that arise within you. Examine the heart of your aspirations, ideals, hopes, and despairs. Analyze the root of your cravings. Life manifests itself through these channels, and so it is that these fundamentals demand understanding.

Meditation is the only portal through which you can escape from all your troubles to infinite freedom. Meditation is the way to forget God's delusive dream of matter, and to remember and realize the forgotten image of God within you.

Do not use your body, mind or soul for perishable pleasures, but use them for attaining the unending joys of Spirit.

Concentrate and meditate early upon waking and before going to bed, or anytime you are free. Fill in the gaps of leisure hours with meditation.

When the devotee completely gives himself to God, then God has to do likewise.

Completeness in God is by no means negation of ordinary life and its responsibilities and joys; finding God is positive attainment that elevates and beautifies all life. (...) When you really contact God, all things become harmonious; all things melt into an ocean of peace.

Break your self-satisfied, doggedly immovable, old habits of idolizing your less important engagements and utterly ignoring the most important engagement: your engagement with meditation and God.

Meditate as much as possible, and try to hold on to the quiet and peaceful aftereffect. (...) Meditation is the only way to keep yourself filled with the power of spirit. (...) Perform all duties serenely, saturated with peace. Behind the throb of your heart, you shall feel the throb of God's peace. Fill your heart with the peace of meditation.

Because of long concentration upon the physical body and its necessities, the soul has forgotten its nature. (...) Looking at the body constantly causes the mind to think of itself as confined in the flesh. (...) The mind thinking constantly about the body becomes limited by it. The mind meditating upon the Infinite becomes unlimited. Meditation is the art of transferring the attention from finite things to the Infinite.

A mundane personality is busy with looking after the body and its cramped relations with a few other human beings. Such a person's consciousness does not extend beyond the gates of its own home. (...) This is why the meditating aspirant must do away with little body attachments. He must learn to overcome hunger and pain. He must learn to conquer all the appetites and attachments that govern the little body, for as long as the mind is focused on the body and its relations, the soul cannot remember its omnipresent nature.

To love or to meditate upon God, one must definitely know Him.

Do material things bring real joy? No, they bring a little pleasure for a while, but sorrow always follows. They promise joy, but they do not keep their promise. Those who amuse themselves too much with material, earthly pleasures will lose their happiness; those who overindulge in sex life lose their vitality; those who

eat too much lose their health, and the satisfaction in eating. Everywhere you go, people are reaping the harvest of wild oats sown earlier in life.

The conscious and subconscious minds are identified with mortal ego consciousness. The superconscious mind expresses the pure intuitive consciousness of the immortal soul. The superconscious mind works first through the subconscious mind, then through the conscious mind, without becoming entangled with either.

Dreams do not come to us from some outside source. They originate in the consciousness of the dreamer. One's own conscious, subconscious, or superconscious mind can create any dream imaginable and project it on the screen of subconsciousness. Since dreams are produced only during sleep (when the subconscious mind alone is operative) or in other states wherein pure subconsciousness is manifest, it is apparent that subconsciousness is the screen on which all dream films are projected, whether they originate in the conscious, the subconscious, or the superconscious mind.

In sleep, the life force withdraws from the sensory nerves, and partially from the heart, and accumulates in the brain. True dream films of comic and tragic happenings of the past lie hidden in the grooves of the brain, all ready to be projected. These films stored in the subconscious mind become vivified and magnified by the accumulated life force in the brain during the deep relaxation of sleep. The stored-up life force percolates through the brain grooves containing the various kinds of dream films or memories, and by strange combinations produces different kinds of motion pictures, which are then projected on the screen of subconsciousness.

The subconscious mind is a multiple personality. In addition to serving as a screen on which the inner dream films are shown, it acts sometimes as a cameraman, sometimes as a director, and sometimes as the operator who projects the inner movie. Thought films made by the cameraman of the conscious and the superconscious minds collect in the chamber of the subconscious. Sometimes the subconscious mind, acting as a projectionist, is superconsciously guided to forecast coming events. Superconscious films thus dropped into the subconscious chamber and projected on the screen of subconsciousness are true dreams or visions. Films dropped by the conscious mind cameraman into the memory chamber of the subconscious mind are often mixed up and projected as various kinds of false or imaginative dreams, but sometimes they may be true dreams. Unless consciously or superconsciously induced, dreams are generally meaningless and false. Only dreams that are true visions are those consciously produced in the spiritual eye.

A developed *yogi* can concentrate upon a single thought, at the same time completely relaxing the body as in sleep, and produce consciously a true dream or vision. A vision consists of the filming, by the all-seeing superconsciousness or soul intuition, of a future event.

When you are able to shift the searchlight of your attention and energy from conscious to superconscious dreaming, enjoying peace at will, you will feel complete freedom from the troubles of this mundane world. At will, you will fly from the planet of physical sensations to the planet of dream sensations, or astral consciousness; or to the superconscious sphere of eternal peace. In order to shift your consciousness from the conscious to the subconscious, your body must also manifest all the signs of sleep; the life force and energy must be switched off from the lamps of billion-celled muscles, and from the optic, auditory, gustatory, olfactory, and tactual nerves.

Visions during the wakeful state are created by the all-seeing, all-powerful superconscious mind. The superconscious uses brain energy to materialize thoughts about a true event which is to happen in the near or far future, and shows it to the *yogi* during the wakeful state with the eyes closed. When a true vision is seen with open eyes, the life force has been projected from the brain into the ether. In this case, the persons and scenes in the brain may not be true to touch, though they are true to sight, and will be true to all five senses, in time, if spiritual development is continuous.

Visions can be had only by going deep into meditation and then wishing to see the real state of things. Visions are real, whether seen during the waking state or as dreams during sleep. Ordinary dreams, however, are only imaginary images. One who is able to dream at will signifies that your will can materialize thoughts, and that you are becoming prepared to produce guiding visions. Visions of true future happenings are very useful in guiding and molding your life, when you can produce them by superconsciousness or Christ Consciousness. The enlightened man seldom dreams any false dreams, whereas the ordinary man seldom dreams any true dreams.

It is better not to dream unintentionally at all, but to be able to produce at will true dreams and visions. (...) When dreams come too often, you should meditate and calm yourself; then this condition will disappear. The more calm you become, the less you will dream. You should be able, by deep meditation and advancement on the path, to dream true dreams at will, or to produce visions of distant events by the all-seeing power of the superconsciousness within you.

Since you are a manifestation of Spirit, you should make an effort to express your infinite potentialities as you are intended to.

Aimless journeys in life are the lot of most people, because in early life they were not started toward the right goal, nor were they properly equipped with systematically developed powers that would enable them to keep moving on definite paths of achievement. On this stage of life, most people behave like puppet actors, manipulated by environment, prenatal instincts, and karmic destiny created in former lives. They never know what parts they can play successfully, nor do they understand how they can harmonize their own duties with the general plan of the cosmic drama. Millions are sleepwalking, so to speak, doing their duties of life as if in a somnambulistic state, unaware of any purpose;

ignorant of the reason for their own behavior, and without any conception of its results.

You cannot remain stationary. You must go either forward or backward. In this life you cannot remain at a standstill.

You should never forget that where there is a will, there is a way.

No matter what wonderful vocation you are practicing, if it does not satisfy your heart, be certain that you are not following the right path. (...) Every man should fulfill his duties as well as foster his talents.

Your power to overcome is greater than all the destructive force of your trials, because you are a child of God. (...) Your forever hungry desires must be attended to; destroy those that are useless, and nourish with proper environment and activity those that are worthwhile. (...) Make mental blueprints of little things, and keep on making them materialize until you can make your big dreams also come true. Be happy in the definite accomplishment of the little objects of your desire; then you can materialize the big dreams of your life.

Attachment to material objects produces misery. Attachment to spiritual inclinations produces realization. Spiritual attachment plus the peace found in meditation creates bliss. Selfishness plus egotism makes miserliness and material attachment. But selfishness plus consciousness of the higher Self, which sees Itself in all, brings breadth of vision and spiritual perception.

Good health depends upon:

- (1) Proper eating, less eating, and occasional fasting;
- (2) Proper elimination;
- (3) Proper exercise, fresh air, and sun baths;
- (4) Conservation of vital energy by self-control;
- (5) Good thoughts and cheerfulness;
- (6) Calm meditation.

Some people do learn that every human being has free choice, but they often find that their free choice is overruled by habits created by past actions in this life and in former lives. For instance, a person who was constantly ill-tempered in his past life will be born with that strong tendency in this life; to overcome that trait and its effects on his life, he will have to change, by persistently employing thoughts and actions to cultivate the opposite quality of evenness.

Man is meant to control himself. As human beings, we have been divinely endowed with self-control. We are not wholly free, but we have been given the key to freedom. In spite of this, many people live an animal-like existence, not fully using their free will and intelligence to gain self-mastery. (...) Man has been endowed with free choice and intelligence, that he may steadily improve his human status instead of remaining instinct-bound like the animals.

Man is meant to live for God in this world. As long as he lives in it for himself he does not evolve to a higher consciousness; instead, being subject to the law of change, he gradually changes for worse.

When the events really happen, it is very hard to remember that it is only a show. Even Jesus said, on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34). The delusion of the reality of this show is very strong, but he overcame it. And Christ taught that all men may overcome it. The Lord as Krishna said to his disciple Arjuna: "My delusion is very hard to conquer, yet it is very easy for those who persevere." Saint Teresa prayed to the Lord, "Don't lessen my sufferings. Let me serve fully my term." (...) Rebellion comes because we are not in tune with the Infinite. He who is in tune with God can overcome the greatest sufferings in life. (...) The Lord says in the Bhagavad Gita, "I have attained all things, yet I work on. And those who would be free must work, not for themselves, but for Me."

When an overdose of drugging sleep makes you lazy and a late riser on Sunday morning, you forget your highest engagement.

Why concentrate upon acquiring what is unnecessary and constantly multiplying self-created useless desires for more than one has? To increase such demands for meaningless luxuries is to find oneself engaged night and day, spending his lifeblood in striving to get things that he does not even need.

Overactivity and idleness both lead to misery. It is high time modern man shook off drowsiness and systematized his life.

A man who wakes up from delusion and tries to become better soon finds his evil habits clashing with a desire for self-control. Even if the soul wins this first psychological battle through discriminative self-control, it has then to go through another and more subtle metaphysical battle – that between the soul's faculties of Self-realization and its egoistic prenatal and postnatal bad habits.

We should correctly gauge the measure of the adversary so as to be sure that we are exerting the amount of power required for successful combat. It is necessary to determine, through daily introspection, whether we are really free to eat, walk, move, work, and meditate, according to the dictates of will power and wisdom, or whether we are tools of bad habits that make us do miserable things in spite of the protestations of our reason and will. To yield to bad habits merely strengthens those bad habits and weakens the will power. (...) Once we have determined to do something of value, we should not waver, but should go through with the idea of its completion. One increases his power of will over bad habits only insofar as he follows the dictates of wisdom. Banish material failure, spiritual indifference, mental and moral weaknesses, and halfheartedness about meditating, by using the will to become more prosperous and to become more spiritual, by exercising self-control, and by meditating deeply until one actually contacts God.

Most people do not realize that indulgence in sense pleasures creates insatiable, unsatisfiable, burning desires for more sense experiences, without ever quenching the inner thirst. In this respect, pleasure is like salt water – instead of quenching thirst, it creates greater thirst. Though difficult to attain, soul joy once gained may never be lost; it never ends in satiety but yields unending, ever new joy.

The devotee should remain firm in his knowledge that, although in the beginning it is hard to give up the happiness of material and sensory pleasures, such renunciation is the only hope of gaining permanent spiritual blessedness. He will be amply repaid when he actually experiences the superior, lasting, ever new joy of inner soul perception.

At that very moment when the mind feels sympathy for forsaken sense pleasures, one should remember that this very dear, sensitive, pleasure-loving body eventually will have to be laid in the grave or consumed in crematory flames. Let this thought fortify you in a stronger effort to contact God through deep meditation. Only thus may man reacquaint himself with the forgotten, deathless, indestructible, real soul that is hidden behind the false pleasure-infested, perishable, pretending-to-be-his-own body.

The devoted spiritual aspirant who prays ardently for inner help becomes aware that the awakening inner light of intuition, the evil-resisting power of his discriminative tendencies and the occult faculties of the superconscious mind will offer spiritual guidance and aid.

First you must build a body that is strong and at your command. (...) Don't sit back lazily. It devitalizes you.

Always center your whole mind on whatever you may be doing, however small or seemingly unimportant it may be. Also learn to keep your mind flexible so that you can transfer your attention at a moment's notice. But above all do everything with one hundred per cent concentration.

If you are a slave to any of the senses, you will lose magnetism. Gaining control over them develops your magnetism. But happiest of all is he who has inward control to maintain an even mind without becoming emotional. Emotionalism must be converted into power, into strength of mind. Let your emotion be governed by wisdom – then you have magnetism. (...) We should exercise extreme caution by keeping our feelings always under our command.

By concentrating on any personality, you can attract that personality.

So long as your material impulses dictate your behavior, you will feel the need for certain possessions; but remember, every time that you waste power in going after unnecessary material possessions, you are farther away from your infinitely more desirable goal: divine magnetism that attracts God, the Giver of all.

The basic law of right human behavior is self-reform. (...) We should always try to overcome inharmony by display of the best that is in us.

No matter what trials come, remember that the greatest test of one's spiritual aspiration lies in his control of himself in his own home environment. (...) If a person's inner peace can exhibit stability and strength at home, and if he conquers others' quarrelsome dispositions by his constant, beautiful expressions of undying love, then he will become a prince of peace. (...) In the expression of soul qualities lies the only way to live peacefully at home; the power is within us to make home a paradise or a hades.

Control of speech is one of the first laws of right behavior. (...) Unruffled, controlled speech, innocent of malice, makes a man king over himself, and honored in his own home.

Those who are not mentally and emotionally strong enough to control themselves should take temporary flight from the scene of trouble. (...) When conditions remain intolerable, however, even after repeated and lengthy efforts to heal the disease of ugliness in one's dear ones, it might be advisable to take permanent flight to some other place.

A negative or evil force is constantly opposing Spirit's emancipating magnetism, which expresses itself in all creation as an urge toward perfection. Each individual feels within himself the tug of war between God's attracting, divine magnetism and the opposing evil force – a magnetism that repels outward, away from the center (God). This negative or "satanic" magnetism, working through the senses and the mind, keeps man attracted to matter. At the same time, through his discriminative and intuitive faculties, he feels and responds to the call of Spirit.

If you are a novitiate on the spiritual path, you should be extremely careful with whom you mix. The influence around you becomes paramount, and so you must be on guard until you are a strong spiritual magnet yourself. If you want to become a spiritual giant, you must associate with those who know God; not because of their talk, but through the silent magic vibration they send forth. And when you come within the range of that magnetism, you will be transformed – that is a fact. So save all your magnetic power to attract the highest necessity of life, which is God. (...) God alone is sufficient. (...) Follow the spirit of truth.

The one reigning consciousness of the soul, so long as it remains located in the brain and at the point between the eyebrows, is marked by the all-seeing power of intuitive bliss, and is called superconsciousness. When superconsciousness descends into the lower brain and the lower spinal centers and viscera, it is called subconsciousness (state of joy mixed with disturbance). When the superconsciousness comes down into the nerves, muscles, and the senses, it is called conscious mind. The subconscious mind and the conscious mind, being manifestations of the superconscious, both have intuitive powers. That is why dreams perceived by the subconscious mind may come true, and strong feelings or "hunches" of the conscious mind may also come true. The superconscious,

subconscious, and conscious minds are all working together. Sometimes one is more active than the other two, which nevertheless go on working in the background. When a person is calm and blissful, the superconsciousness is manifest in the conscious mind. When one is imaginative, it is the subconscious mind that is predominantly manifest. When one is thinking fast, his conscious mind buries beneath it all calm and imaginative traits of the superconscious and subconscious faculties.

The conscious mind is manifest only during wakefulness. It sleeps during the hours when the subconscious mind is predominant. The subconscious mind is the memory mind. It is the mental refrigerator in which all experiences are kept in storage, fresh and ready to be used again upon instant notice. All experiences for the conscious mind enter the vault of subconsciousness and remain there; but they may come out into the conscious mind again through some new opening of thought or experience.

The superconscious mind remains buried beneath the subconscious mind, and the subconscious mind is buried beneath the conscious mind. Working like a janitor while you sleep, the subconscious mind keeps the fire going in the bodily furnace and sees that the circulatory machinery is functioning properly. During wakefulness, the subconscious mind is continuously memorizing conscious experiences. The subconscious mind is always awake, operating the involuntary organs during sleep and memorizing conscious experiences during wakefulness.

The superconsciousness, through intuition, knows everything that goes on in the subconsciousness and consciousness. It can remember all experiences, including those mislaid by the subconscious mind and forgotten by the conscious mind. The superconscious mind can be educated in the school of meditative discipline to recall all the experiences of this life and even experiences of past incarnations.

Through memory, the identity of individual existence is maintained.

Body consciousness gives rise to material desire. Material desires are born not only owing to bad habits, present or from the past, but also owing to the body attachment of the ego. If this body consciousness, or ego, is conquered by the consciousness of omnipresence in Spirit, then King Material Desire and all his armies of sense tendencies are instantly slain. Body attachment of the ego and its desires flees like darkness before the light of soul's consciousness of Omnipresence. We are soldiers of God who have come with the power of love, the power of wisdom, and the power of spirituality to spread the fire of Spirit that burns all darkness from human lives.

Never grieve for anything that is taken. Maybe in this life you will lose all things, and yet, when you have God, you will always have everything. (...) Disown all things from your heart. Enjoy them and take care of them, but just disown them from your heart – develop nonattachment. Nonattachment does not sanction neglect of worldly obligations. It means performance of our material duties with the sole desire to please God and serve His children without a sense of personal

gain. (...) We must be able to hold that attitude toward everything and everybody. It is not heartlessness; it is real expansion of the heart.

You should analyze every thought that you have. (...) Habits of thought are mental magnets which draw unto themselves specific objects relative to the kind and quality of their magnetism. Material habits attract material things, and spiritual habits attract spiritual things.

Meditation opens up all the closed inner gates in the spine and brain that bring power to your body, mind, and soul. When you meditate, your body becomes filled with electricity or life energy that is ever present in the ether. (...) Meditation is the turning of the inner switch that fills the body with the divine current. That is why it is so important to keep your concentration on the aftereffects of meditation every minute of one's existence. Do not neutralize that peace with disturbing thoughts. If you gather concentration in a pail of meditation, and have a leak of restlessness, your concentration will run out. You must not have any mental leaks.

Concentration means to free the attention from objects of distraction and to focus it on one thought. One may concentrate on any subject, whether spiritual or material.

Meditation is that form of concentration by which one disengages the attention from distracting sensations and thoughts so that it may be applied unreservedly to God. (...) Withdraw the mind and energy in order to use them in meditation upon God. Deeper and deeper meditation produces more and more of the ever joyous quality of Spirit.

An advanced student who is engrossed in the ever new, ever increasing joy of meditation is always satisfied, and does not chase after the will-o'-the-wisp of false and useless desires. The experience of divine joy develops a taste for the finer pleasures that lead to happiness, and thus lessens the desire for grosser pleasures. Divine joy never produces an apathy to any right exertion; it enables one to help others in every way.

Long meditations produce a habit of meditation, and depth or intensity of meditations gives you the contact of God.

Happiness depends chiefly upon the inner conditions created by one's own mind.

Meditate deeply. Do not ignore the obstacles in the way of your happiness. Meet them calmly and understandingly, and strive to remove them intelligently. Face them fearlessly; destroy them with the sword of divine wisdom.

All human curative methods are limited. God is the only unlimited healing power.

Ignorance is the barrier that must be destroyed.

No matter how small or humble your duty is, remember that you are working first of all for God. (...) You must make money to take care of yourself and those who are dependent upon you, but use your creative ability and God-guided activity to make it by the right methods. (...) First and most important are concentration and meditation.

Self-control goes hand in hand with discrimination and will power. Train your soul soldiers, the metaphysical rear guards, to come quickly to your aid whenever King Material Desire tries to lead you away with false hopes. Seek and contact God in the temple of meditation. As you become permeated with God Consciousness, the smile of peace and wisdom will glow on your face. Then the encrusted layer of sense attachment will crumble and fall away into nothingness.

The only true freedom lies in wisdom-guided free choice, aided by reason and will power. You will not have to fight alone. As soon as you have roused your will power, determination, and awareness, the hidden occult soldiers who are always trying to emerge from the superconsciousness to show you, through intuition, the right way to well-being and happiness, will come staunchly to your aid.

Through daily meditation and actual God-contact, bad habits will loosen their seemingly inescapable grip. Meditation is the surest way of counteracting the power of temptation and of burning the prenatal seeds of actions, for darkness cannot exist where there is light.

Travel your own path. (...) Each soul should sing to God its own song.

Free your own life from weakness and unlovely qualities.

Find the supreme answer to the human heart's longing for love by loving God and by immersing yourself in divine love through meditation.

Memory should be used and trained to recall only noble and uplifting experiences. Only the good which is gleaned from any experience should be stored in this reservoir of memory. (...) Guard well the gate of your mind.

Attachment to persons and to things causes you to act from a selfish center. Nonattachment is freedom. (...) Whatever you have, regard it as being given into your care by God.

As long as your acts are dictated by blind instincts and habits, influences of heredity, family, social and worldly environments, you are not free. You are free only when you can act spontaneously through intuitive discrimination. When your will is perfectly free to choose through wisdom, that is freedom.

The chill of inertia, or lack of definite, constant effort to know the truth, is the greatest ill from which our happiness suffers. Very few people, except those with master minds, are able to use their powers of free choice exclusively to make themselves what they want to be in life. The majority of people passively allow themselves to grow desultorily, undirected, according to the good or sinister

influences of their prenatal and postnatal habits, or according to the patterns of passing moods engendered by specific environments.

Your body is like an obstinate dog. Leash your mind and body with will power, and hold them to the direction in which you want them to move. Do not allow them to pull you in the wrong direction and thereby fall into the ditch of misery; whip them when they disobey, for the more you whip them, the better they will respond to your commands. Your mind and body have become rebels, constantly protesting to you about the impossibilities in your path; but if you whip them hard, they will hurdle those barriers.

The superconsciousness of man is made of God and is painproof. All physical and mental sufferings come by identification, imagination and wrong human habits of thinking. The Great Director of the drama of life is made of joy. We, as His children, are made in His image of joy. From joy we came; in joy we live; in joy we melt.

Our troubles spring mostly from not knowing what parts we are to play in the greater drama of life. This results from not developing our innate intuitive soul faculties. You must rouse the all-feeling, all-seeing wisdom by regular meditation, and find your part in life. Then life and death will be watched with an unchangeable joyous consciousness. (...) use the God-given power of meditation to reclaim the forgotten image of God within you. Only then can you control destiny and unravel the frustrating mysteries of life.

Do not neutralize the peace of meditation with disturbing thoughts and restlessness. Gather concentration. You must not have any mental leaks. The silence that you experience should be complete silence. You begin to feel peaceful as soon as you grow silent. Cling to the consciousness of peace, and you will find that you are fast approaching God. Make the effort from now on, from this minute, and keep your concentration on the inward peace of meditation continuously. (...) In meditation, you recollect your forgotten peace nature. You must hold on to that peace and with it subdue your mortally acquired mental graftings of disquietude. Meditation is the only door to God.

Ask only for that which you really need. The desire for superfluous material possessions ultimately brings misery and retards spiritual progress. (...) God delights in fulfilling our worthy wishes. Therefore, first establish your identity with Him through meditation. Then you may ask what you need of your Father with a child's loving expectation, knowing that your request will be granted.

For those who have worldly obligations, to perform those duties well and at the same time meditate constantly on God is the very best activity. To forsake your duty to God is the worst sin. God says: "If, while really loving Me and claiming Me, your only real possession, you forget to attend to minor duties, I will free you from the sin accruing from their nonperformance. But remember, those people are far away from Me who perform neither their material duties, nor their greatest duty of keeping in interior contact with Me. They also are far removed

from Me who run away from material duties on the pretext of following the spiritual path, and accept the earnings of other dutiful men for their livelihood.”

A man whose consciousness is on the mundane plane is preoccupied with physical wants and needs; in this cramped environment, his consciousness does not extend beyond the gates of his own bodily home. (...) The constant sight of the body causes the mind to think of itself as confined in the flesh. Meditation upon the Infinite, as it grows deeper, makes the meditator, meditation, and the object of meditation One. (...) Meditation is the art of transferring the attention from the finite to the Infinite.

Retain your calmness. (...) Activity should be under the control of your calmness. (...) Always be ready to be active, but carry calmness with you into your activity. (...) You are a prodigal son when you worry; there is static coming through your mind radio. God’s song is the song of calmness. Nervousness is the static. Calmness is the living breath of God’s immortality in you.

A health-giving worry fast will clear the mind and rid it of accumulated mental poisons resulting from a careless, faulty mental diet. First of all, seek to remove the cause of anxiety without permitting the situation to distress you. Do not daily feed your mind with fresh poisonous fears that you yourself create.

Ignorance of God, or our relationship with Him, is the cause of spiritual disease. It is the sin of all sins, because it is the root from which all other miseries spring. Lack of inner peace, want of harmony with one’s fellow beings, and bewilderment about the meaning and purpose of life are some of the spiritual diseases.

The teachings of a true guru will help you to cure yourself of spiritual ignorance, which is the root cause of all other ills. (...) You can learn from the intuition of your soul whenever you seek her out in the chamber of deep meditation.

If you do fill in the minutes of your life with the thoughts of God, you will find that the years of your life automatically will be saturated with the consciousness of God. (...) Take care of today and all the tomorrows will take care of themselves.

Meditation means constant thinking of God’s presence within and without, so that the soul may lose its attachment to the body and remember its vast body – the Cosmos.

To rouse God, to receive His response, you must offer Him your mental-whisper songs unceasingly. No matter what you are doing, offer deep mental-whisper prayer demands.

In converting the human brain into a thought-receiving radio, one must concentrate deeply, withdrawing all energy into the brain.

Change your thoughts if you wish to change your circumstances. (...) Realize that each thought creates according to its nature. Remember that the law works at all times and that you are always demonstrating according to the kind of thoughts you habitually entertain. Therefore, start now to think only those thoughts that will bring you health and happiness.

Thinking, reading, and repeating statements of truth with deep attention will help to clear away negation and to establish a positive attitude in your mind. Repeat your prayers and affirmations with deep concentration until you establish a habit of thought, until it becomes as natural for you to think in the right way as it previously was for you to think negatively.

The mind, which is the creator, designer, architect, and supreme builder in the body, is the ultimate power to effect healing. (...) The repair of an automobile may be accomplished with parts made and purchased elsewhere. The repair of an injured body part is brought about almost wholly within. Mental healing may be classified according to four methods: healing by autosuggestion or imagination, by reasoning, by feeling, and by will. A thorough knowledge of both mind and body, and their interdependence, is necessary. (...) Healing by medicine and surgery has its occasional uses, but habitual dependence on these means enslaves the body to drugs and surgical operations; then it will always demand them, instead of relying upon Nature, or God, who is the real Healer, and who has established the laws of Nature. (...) Disease is due to the shutting out of life force, the healing rays of God.

Enthusiasm and willingness go hand in hand with fresh supplies of energy. From these facts, we can see the subtle relationship between will and energy. The greater the will, the more inexhaustible the energy. Without willing, we cannot make any motor movement, or even think, for before we think, we must will to think. Total unwillingness to work or move or think would cause death very soon. Similarly, death cannot ensue as long as the will to live is present. (...) Will can be trained and developed to draw continuous supplies of life energy into the body to renew it indefinitely. (...) You should depend more and more upon the limitless supply of the inner source of Cosmic Consciousness and less and less upon the other sources of the body energy. (...) The only way to really keep the body rejuvenated is to unite human consciousness and Cosmic Consciousness through meditation.

Affirmations remind the soul of what it already has, and what it has temporarily lost because of forgetfulness. Affirmations are statements of Truth, and are different from begging prayers. Beggars seldom get what they want from the Father, but a reformed son, trying to remember that he is a son of God, can, by means of affirmations, have anything through the proper application of the vibratory law. When affirming for any desired end, you must free yourself again and again of all devastating negative thoughts. (...) The right thoughts of a man expressed in rightly uttered words also set up rhythmic etheric vibrations that initiate proper actions on his part and harmonize all circumstances connected with attainment of the desired result. (...) Thoughts are vibrations of power and energy. Even strong words or commands are meaningless if spoken feebly and

without a background of latent, vigorous mental force. (...) Your negative thoughts will keep your will paralyzed, making it impotent, unable to initiate the right *modus operandi* that would yield the desired result. (...) To practice an affirmation, first sit calmly with spine held straight. (...) Invoke the all-powerful superconsciousness by meditating deeply. Then make your affirmation firmly and aloud, or in whispers, or mentally. All affirmations, whether repeated aloud or in whispers or mentally, must be impregnated with ever increasing devotion and concentration.

Man needs to understand that his own intelligence controls the atoms of his body. He should not live in a closed chamber of mental narrowness.

This earth is not meant for the experience of heavenly manifestations, but to prompt us to look into the futility of life without God. Gloom after gloom, delusion after delusion – these mirages on the desert of our consciousness must be banished. We must find our true Selves beneath the veil of materiality. Do not base your hopes upon this life. Where is your safety? You are safe only when castled in the realization of God.

Mental relaxation is only one of the first states of metaphysical or super relaxation, in which there is complete, voluntary withdrawal of consciousness and energy from the entire body, and full absorption in one's true identity: Spirit. This release of consciousness from the delusion of duality affords the highest kind of mental relaxation. Before the mind can be free of all distractions – those induced by sensory impressions from without and within, and those created by restlessly wandering thoughts – some degree of physical relaxation is necessary. Those who are very strong-minded may be able to overcome physical distractions by the command of mind alone; but usually the beginner *yogi* finds that it is easier first to overcome physical restlessness by some physical method.

Every human being should be thoroughly cognizant of the earth-binding nature of the impulses of the sex creative force. Until man frees himself from the compulsion of this sex force, he cannot liberate his soul from the revolving wheel of reincarnation and plunge it into its Infinite Life.

Rising above body consciousness does not mean neglect of the body nor of one's work. One should care for the body and perform one's work with his mind on the divine purpose to be fulfilled by attending to these duties. He who can keep his concentration centered on his inner Self even while he is busy with his work is a spiritual being. Realize that when you can reverse the searchlight of your concentration from the senses to the inner Self, you change from sense attachment to self-control, from restlessness to calmness, from consciousness of the body to consciousness of soul peace; the searchlight of your attention is reversed – turned toward Spirit.

Our capacity grows as we become more aware, through ever-increasing contact with superconsciousness, of the unlimited nature of our being.

Seclusion is the price of greatness. In this tremendously busy life, unless you are often by yourself, you can never succeed.

If you live for God alone – if money, or health, or wealth is not your goal, but God alone is your goal – then all else will come to you. Contact God first in the temple of silence; then health, prosperity, and wisdom will be added unto you.

As soon as you withdraw your consciousness and energy from the conscious plane, you reach the subconscious; then subconsciously induced dreams and hallucinations, somnambulism, psychic states, semisuperconscious dreams, consciously induced dreams, and superconsciously induced dreams may be experienced. All these stand in your way just as you are passing from the motion picture house of material or waking consciousness into the motion picture house of the subconscious. You should not keep the searchlight of your attention and your life force centered on the subconscious motion picture house, because hallucinations and dreams hold your attention and they will keep you concentrated there. (...) Avoid dreams, that you be not detained in the movie house of the subconscious, but pass beyond into the calm sphere of the superconscious state.

The ordinary person is influenced by his worldly environment. The man of concentration shapes his own life. The man of concentration plans his day and finds at the end of the day that his plans are carried out; he finds himself nearer to God and his goal. (...) Remember, you should blame no one but yourself for your troubles. If you make up your mind that you are going to control your circumstances according to law, your circumstances will adjust themselves accordingly. Eventually you must learn to lead a controlled existence.

The conscious mind sleeps at night, but the subconscious is always awake – in the daytime as memory; at night as dreams or as the feeling of peace accompanying deep sleep. When you do not dream, but sleep peacefully, you are in a state called semisuperconsciousness. When you can consciously retain this dreamless state of subconsciousness, it is called superconsciousness. The soul manifests superconsciousness through its intuitive process. Dwelling behind the conscious mind are the subconscious and superconscious minds. (...) Superconsciousness and intuition are the same. Intuition is the direct perception of the soul.

Semisuperconscious dreams or superconsciously induced dreams of future happenings generally come true. They are almost like visions, only not consciously induced. (...) A real vision is induced consciously – consciously you reach the state of superconsciousness, and then produce a vision; but a semisuperconscious dream is produced while you are sleeping. The soul arouses itself, and using intuition undergoes an experience so that the ego, when it wakes up and remembers the dream experience may be warned or entertained.

When the soul banishes its ego consciousness, by dissolving its identification with the body, it becomes the pure, true reflection of the Spirit.

An advanced *yogi* finds his soul able to withdraw life and energy from the senses consciously, and to photograph future events or distant scenes and film them as superconscious visions, which may then be viewed with closed or open eyes in the wakeful state also.

Your usual habit of sleep indicates your usual state of mind.

Absolute success signifies the power to create at will what you need by developing your unlimited superconscious power.

Ideally, if you work one hour, you should read two hours, write three hours, think four hours, and meditate most of the time.

Intuition is that directly perceiving faculty of the soul which at once knows the truth about everything. (...) This intuition comes to you as an inner voice, or whispering. (...) Real intuition can never be wrong. (...) Whenever you want to solve a problem intuitively, first go into deep meditation or silence. (...) Meditate regularly for at least half an hour every morning and before going to bed at night.

You have a spark of divinity within yourself and you should try conscientiously to adapt yourself to its dictates. (...) Speak to the Father within and ask for guidance and inspiration.

If your faith is strong enough and there is something you desire which does not exist, it will be created for you and through you. Step out from the crowd and discover how much power you really have. Be untiring in your zeal, (...) with unflinching steadiness march on your path. (...) Release the power that you already have and more will come. Show the world that God's creative principle works through you. (...) You and your Father are one. His power and intelligence are yours. Meditate and work!

The purpose of human life consists in finding out what we really are.

Will power has created everything, even your body. (...) You must exercise your will power. (...) You must make up your mind. (...) Such will power lies within you that if you really put it to use, there is nothing you could not accomplish. (...) When you have achieved success, go on to something bigger and keep on exercising your will power in this way. (...) It is necessary to exercise will power, to strive to tune it with the divine will. When your will revolves continually around one definite purpose, it becomes dynamic will. (...) Don't be passive. Your will was given to you so that you may use it and become a conqueror. Remember, in your will is the will of God. It is His power that you use. Therefore, in your heart, you must love nothing more than God, who is a "jealous" God. If you want God, you must have the will to cast away from your heart every desire but the desire for Him. And if you really want God, nothing wrong can touch you. (...) So always remember that the greatest and highest use of will is to will for God alone.

If you lose your will power and ambition, you are as good as dead already. That is why you should never lose interest in life. If you tamper with will power by utilizing it wrongly, you lose your connection with the cosmic energy; but if you exercise that will power, you contact that tremendous life force. We must keep our will power alive.

Remember that if you remain inwardly calm under all circumstances, you can conquer anything and anyone. True calmness means that God is with you. Never become restless. Never be afraid of anything. Fear is a form of nervousness. (...) If anyone can make you angry, you have not yet attained perfect calmness. (...) The more often you lose your temper, the longer you will remain in the delusory mortal consciousness; but if you remain inwardly calm, you are demonstrating the poise of a true child of God.

The proving ground of all religious truth is within man, in his experience of the Self.

The world lures you into creating bad habits, but the world will not stand responsible for your wrong actions springing from those habits. Why then give all your time to the world? (...) Don't forget, earth-life is only a caravanserai where the soul stops for a while. Don't give importance to it, for we have to leave it sooner or later and move on into the unknown. But we should go handclapped to truth, and so end our miseries and suffering. Understand what life is about. (...) The ties of civilization that exact our attention bring us nothing but sorrow. When we shall be able to free our souls from all physical entanglements, we shall be like divine gypsies.

God is the ocean of infinity oscillating with waves of finitude. We are waves of human consciousness spumed from the ocean of His consciousness. The only way to destroy human imperfections is to unite the temporarily isolated human consciousness with omnipresent God consciousness. (...) Subject to *maya* – the law of change – humans are born, live, and die. But when a human wave discovers by Self-realization that he is really the Sea, when he knows that the Sea has become the wave of his consciousness, he understands that he may pass through many changing conditions, but the wave of his consciousness will never be lost or annihilated.

Nothing except God can satisfy you or wipe away your miseries completely. Your soul, a separate part, must find the Whole to be complete. Your longing for satisfaction must find the perfect satisfaction in God; your desire for knowledge must quench its thirst by drinking the wisdom of God; your peace can be complete only with the peace of God; your existence can be immortal only with the immortality of God; your consciousness can be unceasing only when united with Cosmic Consciousness; your joy can be unending, ever entertaining joy only when combined with the joy of God. The goal of all beings consists in acquiring peace, satisfaction, safety, conscious knowledge, and immortality. In these longings for perfection that lie buried within us, lies the image of God within us. These perfect images of God are trying to manifest themselves in human life. To know God, you must experience Him within your own consciousness.

Diversity is the law of nature. Unity leads to the Infinite. (...) Ideal living that unites souls with truth is the way to happiness, peace, and immortality. (...) The entire process of evolution in nature and man suggests the necessity of quelling the storm of ignorance in order to effect the reunion of the delusion-projected wave of human life with the one ocean of Spirit. (...) Only by realizing our oneness with God may we completely break our self-created imaginary limitations.

Practice the highest methods of scientific concentration and meditation in the morning and at night. Do not be a slave to the senses and their temporary pleasures. Learn to make the senses serve you, and find lasting spiritual joys.

The quickening of human evolution is caused by the development of intuition through concentration. Concentration-born intuition directly perceives truth from within. (...) The usual method of learning by mental conception depends on sense experience and the power of inference, which can only explain the appearance of things. That is why attaining knowledge through intelligence alone seems an endless task.

You can quicken your evolution by increasing the power of concentration. By increasing concentration, you will highly develop your receptivity to wisdom. When you increase your capacity to grasp quickly the meaning and purpose of the problems of life, and to find their solution, then your liberation will be hastened. Do not live the unreasoning animalistic life of ordinary people who do not know anything better than eating, sleeping and multiplying. Evolve beyond the plane of mechanical living, of acting like automatons. For adult human automatons and ignorant children both lead unawakened, mechanical lives, almost like animals.

All knowledge comes from the inner source, from the limitless soul.

You quicken your evolution by consciously condensing all your experience through the power of concentration. Concentration means to gather in your attention, focusing it to a point; condensation means to use that concentrated attention to do something quickly that ordinarily would take a long time. By concentration you can condense each experience and garner whatever wisdom is to be learned from it. By condensation of individual experiences, you can compress all your experiences, and the wisdom they contain, into a shorter length of time and thus gain much more than if you go through life haphazardly. (...) The world starts the process of improvement with books and material methods. You should start by increasing the receptivity of your intuition. In you lies the seat of infinite knowledge. Calmness, concentration and condensation of experiences by intuitional perception will make you master of all knowledge.

In God there is no separation, but for those who have not realized the oneness of God, and their oneness with Him, death is a separation.

Most people who do not try to look into the meaning of life lead mechanical existences, doing only the kind of work that happens to come in their path. They have become slaves of the environment in which they were born, and are whipped by their own habits to run in only one direction of activity. The world influences you to sow the seeds of useless bad habits, material desires, and God-forgetting activities; but the world does not have to answer for your poisonous harvest. You alone are held accountable for the effects of your actions. When you are about to die, the world says good-bye to you, leaving you to answer to your conscience for the effects of activities that you performed under its evil influence. If you have led a life dominated by worldly influences, do not let the world impose its delusions on you any longer. You should control your own life henceforth; you should become the ruler of your own mental kingdom. Fears, worries, discontent, and unhappiness all result from a life uncontrolled by wisdom. (...) You should understand that a balanced life consists first in acquiring supreme satisfaction through the attainment of all-conquering wisdom. When you acquire real mental poise through wisdom, you will automatically be able to acquire prosperity and health. (...) Arise, snatch your life away from the enslaving impositions of instinct, heredity, custom, and conventions! You must remember that no one but yourself is responsible for sowing the seeds of actions on the soil of your life; none but you will reap the just harvest, according to the kind of seed action you have sown. (...) It is not destiny, opportunity, or luck that creates success for you, but attunement, through concentration, with the invisible empire of cosmic laws.

The person who commits suicide is denied the privilege of peace that attends the rightly won pension of death. He who deserts this earth as a coward cannot be granted the pension of rest.

The subjective consciousness or “I-ness” adopted by the soul in connection with the body and its environmental relationships is termed the ego, or pseudo soul. (...) as the soul takes on an ideational, an astral, and a physical body, and the normal and abnormal conditions of these three bodies, it also takes on or identifies with their natures. This is the ego, or pseudo-soul state of consciousness. (...) The physical, astral, and ideational planes all have to be cognized through consciousness and their effects on it. (...) You are a king of three kingdoms; realize that.

Consciousness and energy flow down from God to light the bulbs of the senses. The sensory searchlights reveal the world to us, but they do not reveal God. Only when the downflow of consciousness and energy is reversed, and the light of the sense bulbs is turned within, does it reveal God. (...) The divinely originated consciousness passed through various steps as it descended into matter. By means of *maya*, the cosmic delusive force, the searchlights of your senses are attracted toward matter. (...) As the soul descends the ladder of consciousness, it loses its awareness of omnipresence. That downward passage must be reversed in order to ascend into Spirit again. The purpose of *yoga* is to reverse the downward flow of the consciousness and take the ego back to Cosmic Consciousness again. (...) You must expand your consciousness. When love becomes limited by the selfish ego, it loses its omnipresent qualities. (...)

Meditation is the way to expand your consciousness from the body to the Infinite.

Meditate and keep your mind constantly pointed toward the north pole of God's consciousness. Be like the compass: no matter where it is turned, the little needle goes back to North; so should the needle of your consciousness be constantly attracted toward God. Be with God every minute. Enjoy everything in companionship with the Infinite, and you will be happy in that consciousness.

It does not matter where God places you; you should do your best to play your part well, whatever it may be. Even during sickness and suffering, you should still be able to say: "Lord, Thou and I are one!"

Self-realization is attained only through step-by-step development.

As soon as you enter a room, your consciousness is almost omnipresent in it because you are feeling the movements of other people around you, and sensing sounds and noises, and perceiving shapes and colors.

Man's attachment to matter keeps the soul confined to the bodily prison and prevents it from finding freedom with God in the realm of eternal bliss. The ego attempts to satisfy through material channels the soul's constant, insatiable longing for God. Far from accomplishing its objective, it increases man's misery. The soul's hunger can never be appeased by indulgence of the senses. When man realizes this and masters his ego, that is, when he achieves self-control, his life becomes glorified by the awareness of divine bliss while he is still in the flesh. Then, instead of being the slave of material desires and appetites, man's attention is transferred to the heart of Omnipresence, resting there forever with the hidden Joy in everything.

Good and evil are but relativities of the mortal consciousness. The innate soul of man is not identified with them. When the ocean produces waves out of itself, it does not change in essence. The ocean of God is the essence of Goodness, and the individual soul-waves are composed of that same essence of Good.

Perfection means to be free from all mortal desires.

You think you are free, but you are not really free until you have liberated yourself from the effects of past and present actions. (...) Past actions leave in your mind seeds of future developments. (...) You cannot be free until you have burned those seeds of action in the fire of wisdom and meditation. (...) You should use your wisdom and intelligence to choose the company and the environment that will contribute to your highest good and happiness.

You must always remember that you lead yourself into temptation. (...) You can free yourself if you choose. You are the maker of your own destiny.

Attachment is a wall between you and God. (...) If you do become attached, you will forget God; and that is the test of life. (...) If you are non-attached, you have disconnected yourself from evil, and you have connected yourself with God. (...) The greatest test is whether you can remain like a divine king, behave like a divine king, and go from this earth like a divine king.

Real prosperity, and real freedom are attained when we realize that God is our provider, and that we are absolutely dependent upon Him.

Saints and *yogis* never give up. No matter what our difficulties might be, if we do not give up, we are struggling against the stream; and to struggle is to win the favor of God. Every man must make a supreme effort. We must not let life idly float us down the stream.

The spiritual man works with the consciousness that God is the Doer. The material man works too, but he works and acts with the consciousness that *he* is the doer, and as such he makes himself miserable through his likes and dislikes. (...) When the principles of our activities are not based upon truth, they are bound to bring misery and suffering.

In the beginning of each life, the soul starts out to enjoy manifesting through the body and ends by becoming the slave of the body. (...) Before the wings of spirituality grow, we weave threads of fear, worry and ignorance around ourselves, until disease and death come to destroy us. We find ourselves in bondage created by ourselves. (...) We must learn to live life above the physical plane. We must learn to mentally resurrect, to uplift consciousness from identification with the body. (...) We must resurrect ourselves from thoughts of fear, anger and selfishness, from the clamor or inharmonious living. (...) Pure love is felt inwardly, first in the mind or the heart, and then transmitted to the physical body and manifested outwardly.

For the most part, the senses promise us a little temporary happiness, but give us long, lasting sorrow in the end. Whereas, virtue and happiness within do not promise much, but in the end always give lasting satisfaction. That is why I call the lasting inner happiness of the soul *joy* and the impermanent sense thrills *pleasure*.

Don't think that you are too spiritual to wish for material success. Don't be so busy with material duties that you have no time for meditation and spiritual study. (...) One who is chronically unsuccessful in material life has not learned all its lessons.

When you are forgetful of God while performing actions in the world, you change your center of consciousness from God to matter. And this false material nature will throw you into a whirlpool of change that will drown you with worries and sorrows. The child is busy with play; youth is busy with sex; and the old man is busy with worries. How few think of God the Sustainer of all things.

Resurrect yourself from the consciousness of human habits and human thoughts. Live every second in the consciousness of God. Quicken your understanding; quicken your efforts. Do not keep your soul buried under ignorance, bad habits, animal instincts, and a mortal consciousness. Resurrect it in everlasting freedom! (...) Your first duty must be to commune with God. So remember, precede all mortal actions by contacting God, through deeper and deeper meditation.

Walk the pathway of life with God in your heart. Don't seek the recognition of men; (...) their approbation is worthless. Do not let your environment and your temptations control you. (...) Your first duty is to please God; no duty is more important than your duty to God.

The only way to avoid being trapped by worldly temptation is to know that there are higher things than temptation. (...) When temptation comes, you must *first* stop the action or force, and *then* reason. (...) Remember that you must be the governor of yourself; you must command yourself. Do not let anything or anyone run you.

The taste of forbidden fruit is sweet in the beginning, but bitter in the end. You should be very careful not to let anything interfere with your ultimate happiness.

Find God first and you will find Him in all the noble pursuits of life. (...) When you know God as peace within, then you will realize Him as peace existing in the universal harmony of all things without.

Stop watching the little toy-show of this world. Close your eyes and plunge behind the screen of inner darkness.

Practice the art of silence. When tigers of worries, sickness and death are chasing you, your only sanctuary is the inner temple of silence. The spiritually deep man lives day and night in a calm interior silence into which neither menacing worries nor even the crash of colliding worlds can intrude. (...) You must meditate and create that environment. (...) The stillness within should be maintained even when in the company of other people. Let nothing and no one dislodge you from that calm state; hold on to your peace.

To detach attention from the senses and thoughts, and place it on God only, is called meditation.

The meditating devotee must do away with little body-attachments. He must learn to be proof against warm or cold climates. He must learn to remain calm in the face of difficulties. He must learn to overcome hunger and pain. He must learn to conquer all the appetites and attachments that have been allowed to govern the body, for as long as the mind is focused on the body and its relationship with the limited material world, the soul cannot remember its omnipresent nature.

This world will always have turmoil and trouble. (...) Remember God; forget the world. Go to the shelter of God where the Masters have gone, and whence do the best you can to carry out worldly duties and responsibilities.

If you find God within, you will find Him without, everywhere; but if you try to find Him without, not having first sought Him within, you will never find Him.

Your body is vitalized and fed directly by spiritual energy. That is why Jesus said: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Remember that your body in reality is a group of materialized thoughts.

Destroy the false division between spiritual and material work. (...) All good work is God's work, if you perform it with divine consciousness.

Reform yourself, and you have reformed thousands around you.

The day will come when you cannot see, when you cannot move your hands or feet, when you have no sense of smell, when your skin will not feel the touch of costly dress, and when you will have neither good nor bad thoughts, neither success nor failure, fear nor bravery, life nor death, wisdom nor ignorance, excitement nor peace. Since this must come to pass, why build bad habits and a conviction of permanent comfort around this body? (...) We have no existence except in the universal. (...) Resurrect yourself from the littleness of life. Resurrect your Self. Give yourself to God.

You should try to have good dreams in this life.

Resurrection means to free the soul from the cage of ignorance; to uplift and release the soul from the bondage of mortal consciousness, to let go of the tenacious habit of identification with the body.

The soul, plus the ideational body, plus the astral body, plus unfulfilled desires of past earthly lives and the karmic traces left by past earthly actions, are the forces that combine to compel man to enter a new earthly incarnation. (...) It is as though man has three pieces of clothing – overcoat, suit and undergarment. At the death of the physical body, the soul sheds only its overcoat; the soul is still wearing its suit of the astral body and its undergarment of the ideational body. The astral or subtle body of nineteen vibratory elements, together with the karmic traces left by past actions, reincarnates; but the physical body does not. With each earthly incarnation, the astral body must take on a new physical body.

The astral body is the repository of these four ideas:

- 1) Intelligence (*buddhi* or *mahatattwa*);
- 2) Egoism (*ahankara*);
- 3) Heart or emotion or feeling (*chittwa*);
- 4) Mind or sense-consciousness (*manas*) – ability to perceive through the senses; this is the mind that is chiefly operative in all beings; but the more they employ of intelligence (*buddhi*), the more discrimination and judgment they display.

After these four come the remaining fifteen ideas in the form of three sets of five powers each:

- a) Five instruments of *knowledge*:
The subtle astral powers that enable the physical senses to see, hear, smell, taste, and touch;
- b) Five instruments of *execution* or *action*:
 1. Power to procreate (sexual organ);
 2. To excrete (rectum);
 3. To talk (mouth);
 4. To walk (feet);
 5. And to exercise manual skills (hands);
- c) Five instruments of *life force*:
The five forms of *prana* by which the physical body is maintained; the five vital airs that carry on the crystallizing, assimilating, eliminating, metabolizing, and circulating functions.

At physical death, man encased in his astral and causal bodies, goes to the astral world. There he remains for a certain time (the span is karmically determined). Then he again takes a physical form in order to reap the results (*karma*) of former actions during previous physical incarnations, and to work out all earthly desires that have not been fulfilled.

Desire is the fundamental cause of rebirth. Performing actions with egoistic desire for a particular result leaves traces in the mind, whereas performing actions without selfish attachment to their fruits does not leave traces, i.e. does not create any new mental patterns of binding *karma*. Strong egoistic desires in connection with ambitions or with one's relationships during earthly life are bonds that tie man to the earth and to reincarnations there.

If you are sick or frail during most of this life, you will attract a future physical body with similar weaknesses unless you have learned the karmic lesson involved. If you are healthy now, you will attract a healthy body again – provided you have properly but in a detached way cared for this one. Similarly, if you are wealthy, you are likely to be attracted to a wealthy home again, and if on the other hand you have a consciousness of poverty or lack at the time of death, the karmic tendency created by your mind will cause you to reincarnate in a poor

home. Best of all is to be born into a family of spiritually minded people. Each man attracts to himself parents and environment that he has earned.

What you are now, you have brought upon yourself by what you have been; what you are now you will be, unless you are making a real effort to change your consciousness, habits, and desires. Your present is determined according to your past, and your future (your environment in the next life) will depend upon the essence of your thoughts in the last moments of this life. The trend of your entire life will come before you then, and your character will thus determine the kind of body, mind, and environment you will have in the next life.

The physical body, as such, has no sensory perceptions, only sensory organs; the perceptions have their basis in the astral body. The physical senses are merely instruments of the subtle astral senses, which are the real organs. Only the mode of expression is dependent on the physical instruments of sense. (...) Man can freely use all ten senses in the astral body. In his dreams each night man employs his astral senses; everything a person can do in the physical body, and much more, can be performed in the dream world by the power of mind acting through the ten subtle senses and the five instruments of life force. The phenomena of dreams are proof of the astral nature of sense perceptions and provide a clue to the nature of the astral world.

Egoistic desire keeps the soul in the cage of thirty-five elemental ideas. At physical death man's astral body and causal body enter the astral world. Those who have worked out all their earthly *karma*, and who hold no desire to return to earth, go straightway to God. Hence the saints tell us to conquer desire, "the great enemy", because desire is the chief cause of the soul's bondage in the three bodies.

We are immortal souls, destined to return one day to our home in God. If we die in the consciousness of mortal imperfection, we cannot immediately go back to God. We must eradicate our acquired egoistic imperfections by right living. To re-establish our soul-perfection may require many lifetimes.

The tendencies that we exhibit up to the age of five come from our past lives. After that age they become diluted with newly acquired tendencies of this life.

God sent perfect souls forth to behave like immortals – calm, desireless, and happy – while watching and acting in the moving pictures of earthly life. But, through proximity and ignorant behavior while performing in and watching the intricate dramas of earthly life, souls develop egoistic attachments to other actors and to certain scenes and conditions in the mundane moving pictures. Unless these desires are cast off before death, the soul must return to another body in the same earthly moving picture house in order to work out the desires born here. (...) Actions performed to please God create no karmic bonds of attachment. (...) The lazy, negligent person who is not ambitious to please God by good actions on earth has to come back until he learns to work with the sole purpose of pleasing God. The egotist, who works only to please himself, becomes

involved in an endless net of desires, from which he can extricate himself only after many incarnations.

Immortal soul-children are sent to the movie house of life to make pictures or to watch pictures of life, both tragedies and comedies, with unruffled equanimity. When these divine children can go back to God and say: "Father, I enjoyed acting in and watching Thine earthly moving pictures, but I have no more desire for evanescent amusements", they are no longer forced by their material desires to come back to earth.

Yogis who learn in their earth-life how to remain conscious during the state of sleep, and who can stop the breath at will and still remain conscious, may then go out of the body consciously, and remain conscious, even in the final sleep of death. Souls that have lived virtuously on earth have the privilege of leaving their vibratory residence in the astral world whenever they desire to reincarnate on the physical plane; reincarnation is not forced upon them. People with deep realization may thus come and go from earth as they wish.

Hidden in each man's heart is eternal divine love. It may remain asleep for awhile, but it can never really die.

If a man's human love fails, he will be dissatisfied and keep on seeking other loves in this life. (...) Convert your human love into divine love.

Salvation lies in completely freeing the soul from its identification with the three bodies. Great souls incarnate in the three bodies without being attached to or identified with them.

Even when you arrive in the heavenly astral kingdom, you will not be completely satisfied. You have to free yourself from all delusions, whether of the physical world or the astral world, before you can realize yourself as eternally blissful Spirit.

Karma is the law of action. Mind or body in a specific form of movement is termed *action*. Every action mentally or physically performed, consciously or unconsciously, has a specific effect on the life of man. These good and bad effects of actions in this present life remain in the subconsciousness, and those seed effects brought over from past existences are hidden in the superconsciousness. The seed effects of actions – good or bad – are stored in the subconsciousness or superconsciousness until one develops spiritually to the point where his actions are no longer identified with feeling or personal attachment. The ideal is not total inaction or inertia; rather, to cognize experiences without desire for the fruit of action. Action is necessary to life on this plane, but it should be performed with unselfish ambition if one is to avoid imprisoning karmic chains.

Action that is performed in this life by free will and intelligence is called free action, or *purushakar*; actions performed under the influence of habits established by actions in past lives are called *samskar*. (...) This inner environment governs your life. There is also an outer environment – the planets, world, nation, family, neighborhood, books, and so forth. These all influence man's actions.

Karma exists for man so that he may learn from its workings the wisdom of returning from multiplicity to unity. Transgression of karmic law delays man in his spiritual evolution.

Springs of action: 1) impulses acquired in previous state of existence;
 2) influence of environment;
 3) impartial reason of man;
 4) acquired habits of present life.

Nothing rules you. You are the architect of your destiny. (...) Only those who do not understand that there is a law of cause and effect believe in chance or fate. (...) So long as we live in spiritual poverty, we are governed by the law of cause and effect, and thereby suffer the limitations and insufficiencies of materiality. (...) God made us His children, but we have chosen to play the role of beggars.

Essentially we are perfect souls. Souls come to earth to work out sins. When they have overcome, souls become free to be one with God again. Souls who re-establish their perfection need never again come back to earth.

All effects or seeds of our past actions (*karma*) can be destroyed by roasting them in the fire of concentration, meditation, the light of superconsciousness, and right actions, free from desire for the fruit of action.

Success in all lives – until emancipation frees one from such considerations – consists in the ability to destroy all the apparent tendencies of failure by the power of superconcentration.

Every day you should increase the strength of your body, the strength of your mind, and awareness of your omnipotent soul by meditation, right thinking, and right activity. Thus you will make body, mind and soul a temple of eternal power where God may reign.

Most people do not try to understand life at all. They live mechanically, without any aim or goal, and leave the shores of this world unconsciously when life is done. We are not meant to live thus, like automatons. We must find the purpose of life.

You know that you must eat and you must think in order to live; therefore you should find peace first in fulfilling your material and intellectual needs. We can build the temple of our prosperity by analyzing our existing needs and learning how to fulfill them in a divine way. By analysis we can see that the nature of every human being is threefold: physical, mental, and spiritual. Life is often spent

in supplying the needs of the physical being only. However, man's true prosperity lies in supplying the needs of his mental and spiritual beings as well.

Real prosperity means supreme happiness, mental efficiency, and some material advantages. (...) The wise person always concentrates upon the things that are absolutely necessary. (...) You should increase the strength of your body and then increase the power of your mind. The best way to increase mental power is to try to accomplish something worthwhile every day.

Some persons build air castles in fancy, but because they do not know how to hold onto them tenaciously, or how to materialize them, those castles in the air vanish in the invisible domain of consciousness. Men of success are those who have forethought enough to make an indelible blueprint in their minds of whatever they wish to build or produce upon this earth. Backed by their creative ability, they employ their will power, their detailed attention and their mental patience to materialize in true life the desired result or object.

Tempting all creatures to remain on the plane of sex creation, Satan fights the divine law of evolution through reincarnation, by which souls evolve into higher and higher forms until they go back to Spirit. (...) In spite of the cosmic satanic power's influencing everything to remain in finite forms, the Infinite Power is ever calling everything back to merge into Him by the law of evolution and reincarnation. God's power, through the law of natural death or change, is constantly trying to release finitely influenced souls to infinite freedom.

Diseases should be looked upon as the results of broken laws of physical, mental and spiritual harmony which, when broken, produce disturbances of the body and of the peace of the soul. (...) Since diseases are the result of one's own ignorant wrong actions, these delusive causes should be uprooted by right application of material and spiritual laws. (...) Realize that the soul cannot be affected by disease. Regard the body from an impersonal standpoint.

The body is the closest friend and relative of the mind; it suffers only through identification, closeness of association, and imagination, and for no other cause whatever. Do away with mental sensitiveness. You should be able to speak of all experiences as dream experiences, real only to the deep dreamer, unreal to one awakened in wisdom. To say to the mortal dreamer that disease and death do not exist is to confuse and delude him. He must first be shown how to awaken in God through meditation; then he will realize that he was only dreaming disease and death.

If you do not choose to redeem yourself, no one can redeem you.

The way to freedom and happiness is through meditation and being in tune with God.

To become bored with life and succumb to temptations is wrong. When you meditate, you will see what life really is.

When you have God, you will find that he is sufficient.

Environment has a very strong influence upon us. Environment is stronger than will power, so choose your environment carefully. (...) When your good thoughts and good actions have become sufficiently abundant, there will be no room in your environment for evil seeds to sprout, and so they will die out.

To die in God and to live forever is the highest ideal.

If you are in the world and yet have not attachments, you are a real *yogi*. Do not worry too much about superficial things.

Jesus taught physical renunciation and also mental renunciation. (...) You must conquer the mind.

In your consciousness, there are all kinds of records, both good and bad. Destroy all records that revive memories of unhappiness and evil deeds. As soon as you have learned the lessons they brought you, scatter them to the winds.

Many people think that Hindus are idol worshipers. This is not true. The Hindus worship the meaning of their symbols. An idol should be a reminder to us of the ideal or spiritual quality it represents. When one forgets the meaning and worships only the symbol, then it becomes idolatry.

If your heart is ready, if you are desirous of knowing God, and if you continuously march toward Spirit, then you will meet the saints of India and you will recognize them. When your heart is not ready, you may meet them and yet not recognize them. But once a true teacher has been found, if you follow him with due reverence and with open eyes, you will save yourself years of otherwise wasted time, for no one can lead you to God unless he himself has first found God.

God gave us reason that we might use it to solve the mystery of His presence behind the veil of *maya* and, finding Him, find freedom from *maya*.

Discrimination is of little value unless it is accompanied by activity along the line indicated. To be discriminative is to be awake and very much alive – you will be able to perceive the truth in any situation; no one will be able to deceive you.

Be master of yourself. Then you can create at will whatever you need.

Do your duty to God first, and through attunement with Him, do your duty to the world.

The *yogi* strives to be one with others. (...) Compassion must be impersonal; it must not exclude one in preference to another. One must first practice compassion with a few persons, then extend it to all in hearts.

As the ocean cannot be given to you in a cup, so the ocean of wisdom cannot be poured into a small cup of intelligence. In order to hold infinite truth, intelligence must be expanded or enlarged by meditation until it becomes a boundless cup of intuition. Intuition is that power of Spirit inherited by the soul, by which the soul can perceive all things directly without the medium of any other faculty. (...) Scriptural truths can be perceived only through intuition.

Until the soul has completely worked out the effects of egoistic prenatal and postnatal actions, and has found liberation, one should not deliberately seek exit from the bodily house; he would still have to come back to finish the *karma* he left undone.

All unfulfilled desires create rebirths. The only way to liberation is to find the all-desire-quenching divine Bliss in ecstatic meditation. Then God is attained; the purpose of earthly living is completed. Then, and then only, can those who are united with Him stay on earth as long as they want to – for a little while or for a long time. All souls are sent to earth to find truth; that is, to know God and His purpose in creation. When that is attained, they are liberated. Souls who come on earth and misuse their God-given free will become caught and have to roam in labyrinthine pathways of rebirths, experiencing all kinds of painful deaths and mysterious reincarnations. But if souls seek the guidance of saints and meditate and lead the right kind of life according to the will of God, they become liberated.

To liberate the soul, it is necessary to avoid dying in ignorance. (...) The soul must first avoid entering a body-prison; and the way to avoid that is to cease creating and pursuing material desires which cannot be satisfied anywhere except on the material plane, and which therefore make it necessary for the soul to reincarnate. The metaphysical way of overcoming death is to live in the world, but not of the world; to act upon the world stage, but remain unaffected by the role one has to play. Therefore, desirelessness should be practiced. Desirelessness means performing only good actions to please God instead of acting mainly to satisfy some desire of the self. Performing all actions in order to please God is the way to overcome rebirths. He who is born must die; and he who lives ignorantly must die and be born again.

To know God is to be free from the cosmic dream-delusion of life. (...) Material entanglements, sweet and mysterious, keep us dreaming so that we forget to wake up before the dream of life vanishes into the Infinite. (...) Reestablish your dreaming mortal consciousness in immortal wakefulness in God. Do it before the lotus leaf of your life withers and lets the dewdrop of consciousness slip unaware into the ocean of Infinity.

Geniuses are made by developing the power of intuition.

True love and devotion to God can only come through meditation. To those who are just waiting for the visitation of divine love, it will never come. (...) Do not live bound by the attachments of worldly life and then leave these shores a poor soul, without God. (...) Realize that you are an immortal child of God sent on earth to pass the great examination of life so that you may go back to Him.

Before divine union is attained, it is wrong to say: "God is doing everything, not I."

Spiritualize your desires and ambitions, and only desire to please God in everything you do. (...) Work for Him; then you will leave no trace of desire behind you. Once you gain this power over reincarnation, then you can come on earth of your free choice to bring others back to the shores of Omnipresence.

Unless you practice being in a high state of consciousness now, you will not attain it after death.

You must change your status from that of a mortal beggar to that of a divine son. Instead of supplicating, you must demand what belongs to you by right, as divine child who is born in the image of God. You must seek the lost kingdom of God first; then all the material and spiritual things you need and want will be added unto you as your divine birthright.

As a mortal being and a beggar, you have sought bread and money first; therefore you have had great difficulty in securing even these. God and His gifts do not come to you with the attainment of material gain; they come only by seeking and knowing God first. Bread, and all other things, come to you automatically, like willing slaves, when you have found God. This is the truest and surest way by which you can fulfill your desires.

The more you meditate, the more transparent will your mind become.

It is our own delusion and errors that make us forget God.

Mental victory over the changing conditions of life is essential for the furtherance of life's work. In fact, lack of success in life is caused by failing to hold one's mentality on the higher plane.

Meditation is the only way to escape the clutches of universal delusion and go back to God. It is the conscious way of going into the Infinite, where limiting concepts – all that belongs to the delusive little finite body and its finite world – are forgotten.

The advanced devotee does not concentrate upon the delusive contradictory imperfect state of nature, but keeps his attention focused upon the perfect nature of God.

There is hidden strength within you to overcome all obstacles and temptations. Bring forth that indomitable power and energy.

Possession of material riches without inner peace, is just like dying of thirst while bathing in a lake. If material poverty is to be avoided, spiritual poverty is to be abhorred, for the latter is the cause of all human suffering.

An environment-enslaved body is constant trouble to the mind; an enslaved body is apt to enslave the all-powerful mind.

Feeling is that faculty which passes judgment upon the experiences of the senses. It expresses itself in terms of pain or pleasure of the body, or sorrow or happiness of the mind. Sensitive feelings become so accustomed to passing quick judgments upon the nature of specific sensations they experience that the all-powerful mind succumbs to these disturbances. Sensitive feelings magnify sensations. Instead of impartially experiencing the variety of sensations permeating the body, they create pleasure or pain out of the attitudes of likes and dislikes that they whimsically form in their hasty judgment of the nature of specific sensations. In short, feeling classifies all experiences as being pleasurable or painful, according to its own preconceived likes and dislikes. If its judgment could be neutralized, that is, made impervious to short-lasting excitations or ephemeral pleasures and pains, then all experiences would be merely intellectually cognized.

Physical pleasure and pain are derived through a long-continued mental habit. (...) A strong aversion to a certain train of sensations develops pain. (...) Consciousness of pain, either physical or mental, is solely a mental experience and is created by the ego and feeling. (...) Pain or physical pleasure, although they accompany body sensations, are not created by the stimuli or the sensations, but are created by feeling, imagination, and mental habits born of environmental and hereditary influences. (...) Sensitiveness is the root cause, the primeval mother of all pain and mental sorrow. (...) Thus it is wrong to acknowledge pain or sympathize with misery-making sensitiveness in people, for it strengthens the delusion of pain and sorrow. All wrong ideas must be gradually overcome by the mind first, then by the body. (...) The human soul must break away from the self-imposed imaginary limitations of the body in order to learn that everything in the phenomenal universe is made of the condensed consciousness of Spirit.

Pain comes through identification; identification causes pain. One must be impartial and not excited. (...) A mentally sensitive man, a "touchy" person, is always feeling hurt by material contacts and by his conversations with people. (...) That is why stimuli and sensations of heat and cold, or of body wounds, should be cognized by the mind only as ideas. (...) Man's body must be made pain-proof, until in it are found the invulnerable, unchanging qualities of Spirit.

Consciousness cannot hurt consciousness without acceptance. It is very difficult to hurt an ever-smiling wise man who considers all the injury done to him as due to ignorance. He refuses to allow his consciousness to acknowledge or accept the inharmonious ideas of other people. He knows that the ego's process of cognition and any hurt-suggesting thought can be linked only by feeling. Thought can never be hurtful unless feeling overpowers it; that is, consciousness cannot be hurt by consciousness without conscious acceptance. Certain conditions in the body, being inharmonious, suggest pain, but that does not mean that they should be given the opportunity to be successful in producing pain. Feeling, mental dislikes, haunting suggestions of ancestral habits, lack of mental training, ever

increasing sensitiveness and nervousness – all these give birth to pain. Continued sensitiveness nurtures pain, and in turn produces mental sorrow. Whereas, a steely mentality, which cannot be dented by the blows of accidents and physical and mental trials, can remain untarnished, ever shining, ever piercing the veil of dark ignorance, destroying the vitals of the apparition of pain.

Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev

The quality of our life is determined by the way in which we experience life – not by our circumstances.

All external sources of fulfillment will over time turn into frustration: what used to be sweet will become sour. None of our distractions to feel good or to be happy are sustainable.

Only one who is in constant touch with the Ultimate Reality will know bliss.

Desire is an unpersonal life energy. The context of our desire is not about us – it's about our social exposure: we look at others and compare; then, we want more, better and newer.

Unfulfilled desire is the basis of all human misery: life is not happening the way you think it should happen.

Intensity of action is not possible if there is no desire: rolling out our desire to play the game is necessary (*conscious desire*); if you cannot roll back your desire by the end of the game, you are insane (*compulsive behavior*).

There are only two possibilities: either you move towards liberation, or you get entangled with yourself.

This moment is eternal and inevitable; there is nothing else.

Anything that you can accept always becomes a part of you; anything that you resist always ends up in front of you.

To identify with what we gather ("our accumulations") is our compulsive hobby. We gather all of this because of a sense of insufficiency in our existence.

We have to evolve from a *psychological process* into an *existential process*.

Obligation, or living by duty ("I have to"), is sin. If you have no love for what you do, it is better to withdraw from work and beg your food.

Karma is the very basis of our existence. Without *karma*, we would leave our body – we would not be able to sustain it.

Once you have reached enlightenment, it is an everyday balancing act to keep the body going. Your energies have reached a peak – they do not want to stay in their physical case; they want to go.

We believe this and that because we don't know, so we fill ourselves with bull. We live on the basis of very weak assumptions – and deep inside, we know that this is the case.

We keep ourselves busy because otherwise, we would be completely lost. All activity is coming from a certain feeling of insufficiency.

Liberation means that you seek the destruction of the karmic body.

We live by complete identification with what surrounds us.

The moment you label aspects of life “good” and “bad”, you have divided life. There is only One Creation.

If we don’t learn to stand on our own feet and develop life mastery, we live accidentally. Then, anxiety is very natural.

[Regarding life mastery:] You have to be able to make big things happen.

Are you committed to creating authentic value?

The mind does not want to stay in “I don’t know”-mode; it wants some conclusions in order to feel secure and comfortable.

Just getting up in the morning and going to work is not worth it, unless something big is happening in your experience.

[Regarding Truth:] Only what cannot be dismantled should be there.

It’s not about other people or situations. They only bring out what is already inside of us to begin with. What is happening within you is 100% your making. If you see this, you can be the way you want to be. Otherwise, just about anyone and anything can play with your life. The seed of your experience is always within you – you don’t experience anything “out there”. All human experience is created 100% from within.

The only way to enlarge your life is to enhance your ability to perceive. It’s the quality of the root that determines the quality of the fruit.

The nature of the mind is confusion, because it cannot figure out anything. In addition, the mind is always receiving much more than it ever can process.

Either our thinking is conscious, or it is mental diarrhea.

Whatever we are unconscious about, at that level we suffer. We get stuck through lack of awareness; we identify with one set of clothes.

The less your “me-personality” becomes, the more your awareness expands.

Our personality is created mostly unconsciously. For most people, the personality is a rigid mask. Our personality is a complex system of likes and dislikes. The moment we say “I like this”, the identification process will start.

Destroy the personality every day, so that it becomes a flexible aspect. You need a personality in order to operate in the world, but keep it flexible, so that you can take action in all appropriate ways. By meditation, we withdraw support for the personality: the personality collapses; only the presence remains.

Look at thoughts, emotions, body as if you were only overflying them in a balloon: you are at a far away distance; you are not invested at all in what's going on.

Without being in exchange with the rest of the cosmos, you cannot exist. The idea of individuality is an illusion.

People by themselves are utterly lost; the group gives the illusion of security.

When sounds are in tune, they become music; out of tune, they become noise. It is the same with you: when all aspects of you are in tune, you become music; out of tune, you become noise.

Spiritual process means, we're trying to dissolve all that you created.

Somewhere, you felt so inadequate as a being that you tried to become some kind of person with some strength: you're trying to taste the false strength of your personality; you're trying to make yourself worthwhile by building a personality – it's a way to push yourself through in the world.

The less person you carry, the more presence you have; the more person you carry, the less presence you have. All spiritual practice (*sadhana*) is towards dissolving the personality and enhancing the presence within you.

Once you are a human, either you evolve consciously, or you stagnate – that's all the choice you have. What is human is not established; what is human is a flux. Nature has left you free to become anything you want to become. Right now, human beings are not suffering their bondage – they're suffering their freedom.

Socially, you can look at another person and say: "I am better". But by yourself, you do not know.

If you suffer your bondage, it's bad enough, but it's okay – because if you suffer your bondage, you'll want to become free. If you suffer your freedom, it's a tragedy – because: what is the way out of freedom? There is a way out of bondage, but there is no way out of freedom. Freedom is a benediction if you're aware; freedom is a curse if you're unaware. If you remain a compulsive creature, you cannot call yourself a full-fledged human being. Only when you're able to do everything by choice, you can say: "I'm human" – because a *human being* essentially means: he is what he is by choice. If he becomes compulsive, he is like any other creature: biological, that's all.

Both the giver and the receiver can get in deep trouble by giving something or by receiving something for which they are not ready. Misplaced compassion always comes from your ego: “you want to be the most compassionate person on the planet – wherever anybody needs anything, reach out”. This is not coming from any kind of understanding or wisdom or awareness; this is coming from wanting to be the best or the most: “I don’t want to be ordinary; I want to be somehow special”. True compassion is not about giving or taking; true compassion is just doing what’s needed – you have no preferences of your own. You revving yourself up in a huge amount of emotion and reaching out to somebody is not compassion – this is just self-satisfaction, devious ways to fulfill yourself. Genuine compassion is possible when there is nothing to fulfill in you; you’re just doing what’s needed. You should help people to evolve to where they will naturally receive the bounty of life. If you give to an unevolved person, you will only overburden him; you will only destroy his life. You must put him through the painstaking process of evolving him to higher possibility, where he will receive higher dimensions of life. If you give a ton of gold to an ant, it will only crush the ant; it will not make the ant rich.

This life is designed to find its own ultimate nature; you don’t have to do anything.

Don’t try to surrender, as it is only of a certain realization that surrender happens.

Only that which you are aware of exists for you.

All experience, pleasant and unpleasant, essentially happens from *within*: you can either take external stimuli, or you can create your own stimuli. (...) *You* determine the nature of your experience; the experience of your life is entirely *your* making – this is *your* karma.

If you have no vested interest, and if you deal with life the way it has to be dealt with – once you are like this, you will function to your fullest potential.

Don’t think in terms of weeks, months, years, decades, or lifetimes; think in terms of *moments*, because life is in moments.

If you use your mind to seek a solution, it will set up a new trap for you.

What your *personality* is has become *you* – you’re completely identified with it.

We want to get you to a place where, without activity, you are completely involved.

Everything that comes to you is just a question of your perspective.

Whatever the game is, you can play it without deviating from the purpose of life.

Life is in different phases and different dimensions. If one does not move from one phase of life to another gracefully and joyfully and willingly, life will become ugly.

So the problem is just this: you are giving too much importance to what's happening in your little head; and you are not paying enough attention to all the magnificent things that are happening in the existence. I've never seen a bad day in the existence; I've only seen bad days in people's moods and minds.

If you can really get out of your mind, only then will you be 100% sane. As long as you are in the mind, you will be mad in different stages.

Constantly existing here in comparison with anyone else is an insult to the Creator.

It's only with involvement that you can know life, isn't it? Become so involved that there's no distinction between *you* and what is *life*. (...) There's no such thing as *me* and *my life*: *me* is *life*; *life* is *me* – because I'm so deeply involved in it.

Right now, mind is just a huge ball of confusion, because you got identified with so many things that you are not, and now you're trying to hold it back. But there is no way to hold it back: you ate very bad food; now there's gas in the stomach – you can't hold it. You've eaten bad food; the consequence is there. You got wrongly identified with too many things; now this is going on endlessly. You cannot stop it; it does not matter what you do. So what's being done here is not about controlling your mind. We gave you a simple device called *shoonya*, with which you create a little *distance from the mind*. Once distance happens, even if it's a noisy mind, still it doesn't matter. (...) Once you disengage from the mind, you disengage from *all identity*, because it's the mind which manufactures identifications.

Devotion means, you're devoid of yourself.

Don't look for a purpose in life, because if you look for a purpose, you are seeking madness. If you find one, you are sure mad – these are things which you create in your mind and then believe it's true. If you think something is your purpose, you would want to destroy the whole world for what nonsense you believe in. The purpose of life is to live, and to live totally. To live totally means, before you fall dead, every aspect of life has been explored; nothing has been left unexplored.

Mukti – liberation – is the ultimate goal in life. Everything else is merely a stepping stone on the way towards *mukti*. Liberation is the only thing; everything else is merely instrumental, even our ideas of God.

Depending on how much clarity (insight) you have with life, only to that extent you are going to handle it.

If one wants to really know higher dimensions of life, one thing that is necessary is that within you, there is a constant sense of peacefulness and joyfulness. If this is not there, then you will go after something. If you don't feel peaceful and joyful, then you will do compulsive activity, trying to be happy. A *brahmacharya* is someone who's trying to organize energy in such a way that to be peaceful and joyful is all his own – he's not going to lean on anybody for that. If the peace and joyfulness are not there, a person will naturally get entangled in compulsive activity. *Brahmacharya*, on one level, means: moving from a compulsive human being to a conscious human being; *compulsiveness* means: a very deep sense of slavery. *Brahmacharya* means that you bring consciousness to every aspect of your life.

Be it nationality, religion or brand of clothes – people identify themselves with just about anything. In trying to bring stability to their lives, they only celebrate their limitations. That is not the way of life.

There is no such a thing as an “open mind”, because mind is a closed possibility – it's accumulation, isn't it? Please look at it sincerely. What is there in your mind apart from what you gathered from outside? I can look at the world directly; why should I look through the distortion of the mind? There are no “new” ideas. Everything that creation has, you are just imitating in small ways, that's all, isn't it? Don't think you've invented something new, created something new. No. You're just finding different applications for what was already there.

If every day of one's life, if every hour and moment of our life, if it has to be a forward movement, if it has to be a process of growth and not stagnation, then it is important that we are in constant communion with that which is the Ultimate Truth. In identifying ourselves with limited aspects of who we are, we are identified with many things. Anything that you touch, anything that you sit upon, anything that you set your eyes upon – all these things, you get identified with. As you get identified with this thing and that thing, you are throwing your anchor, hoping that your ship will go somewhere – but it will only sink. If you are in communion with Truth, then your associations will be just associations, not attachments; then you will know involvement in life, but you will not know entanglement in life. If your intention is to evolve as an ongoing process, every day, every hour, every moment, the breaks should go off – only then it will roll. Whatever you see, you are getting attached to it; whatever you see, you are getting identified with it. If you identify yourself with anything that is not you, obviously you're not moving from untruth to Truth; you are moving from Truth to untruth, from reality to hallucinatory process. In this, one will not evolve; in this, one will just entangle – because in this, you will not know the nature of your existence; in this, you will not touch anything that is real. The psychological drama will rise in such a big way, it will raise so much dust in your head that you cannot see what is in front of you. If you are in a state of non-identification with anything other than Ultimate Truth, you will come naturally to an unwavering way of being. Once you are unwavering in your purpose, liberation cannot be denied to you. The reason why this life does not get to its natural destination is: every minute, you are changing course; every minute, the focus of your life keeps shifting; every minute, whatever you set your eyes on, this you get identified

with. So after some time, this life just does not know where to go: it will be one confusing mess; suddenly, life looks unnecessarily complicated – but the complication is only in your psychological process.

There is only one way – and that is *in*.

Peace and joy are the basic requirements for a life of well-being: peace and joy are not things you attain at the end of life; they are the basis of your life.

The spiritual quest is not a cultivated choice; it is not an induced quest – it is a natural longing. But unless you handle it consciously, it will not yield. Enlightenment is not an attainment or an achievement; it is a homecoming.

When pain, misery or anger happen, it is time to look within you, not around you.

Most people are not aware of the nature of their longing. When their longing finds unconscious expression, we call this greed, conquest, ambition; when their longing finds conscious expression, we call this *yoga*.

We transform the physical body from a series of compulsions of flesh, blood, and hormones into a conscious process, a powerful instrument of perception and knowing.

Logically, somebody who never put effort into anything should be the master of effortlessness. But it is not so. If you want to know effortlessness, you need to know effort; and when you reach the peak of effort, you become effortless. Only a person who knows what it is to work understands rest. Paradoxically, those who are always resting know no rest; they only sink into dullness and lethargy. This is the way of life.

The very essence of *dhyana*, or meditateness, is that you push yourself to the highest possible intensity where, after some time, there is no effort. Now, meditation will not be an act, but a natural consequence of the intensity that has been achieved: you can simply *be*. It is in these absolutely non-compulsive states of existence that the necessary atmosphere is set for the blossoming of an individual into a cosmic possibility.

Once life has reached the level of evolution that human beings have attained, it is natural to aspire not just to stability, but to transcendence. Now, it is left to individual human beings either to remain trapped in the cyclical, or to use these cycles for physical well-being, or finally to go beyond the cyclical entirely. If you are compulsive, you will see that situations, experiences, thoughts and emotions in your life will be in cycles. They keep coming back to you once every six or eighteen months, three years, or six years, depending on your degree of compulsiveness. If you just look back at your life, you will notice this. If they come once every twelve years, that means your system is in a high state of receptivity and balance.

Existence is a dance between the unmanifest and the manifest. All the various manifestations that you see as life today are fundamentally rooted in duality; because there are two, there are many; if there were only one, there would be no existence – once there are two, the game of life begins.

As far as your body is concerned, it is going, moment by moment, straight toward the grave. Right now, you may have forgotten, but slowly, as time passes, it will become more apparent that this is the nature of the body. If all that you have known is the body, and anyway you are going to lose it, then anxiety and fear will be your constant companions.

Once you live a compulsive life, you are living the life of a slave. Slowly, as different kinds of compulsions take over, you grow more and more miserable. There is something within you that is unwilling to be a slave.

It is only when you confront your mortality – the potential but inevitable termination of your physical form – that the longing to go beyond does become genuine.

Being a *Buddha* means that you have become a witness to your own intellect.

Once your intellect – or *buddhi*, as it is termed in the yogic taxonomy – gets identified with something, you function within the realm of this identity. Whatever you are identified with, all your thoughts and emotions spring from that identity.

Once you are identified with something that you are not, the mind is an express train that cannot be stopped. If you put the mind on full steam and want to apply the brakes, it will not work. But if you are able to disentangle yourself from everything that you are not – if you disidentify, as it were – then you will see that the mind turns just blank and empty. When you want to use it, you can; at other times, it will simply be empty, devoid of all psychological clutter. That is how it should be.

Irrespective of what you think you are, when death confronts you, every identification falls away. If human beings learned to drop these voluntarily, life would be blissful. If you do not encumber your intellect with any identifications – body, gender, family, qualifications, society, race, caste, creed, community, nation, even species – then you travel naturally toward your ultimate nature. If not, death will demolish it all anyway.

The accumulative part of the mind is, to put it simply, just society's garbage bin; it is merely a heap of impressions you have gathered from outside. When you keep your intellect dipped in this limited, fragmented, accumulative dimension of your mind, you draw conclusions about life that are completely distorted. The more people become engrossed in thought, the more joyless they become.

If you consciously walk a tightrope, you have no choice but to be aware. Bring precision into every movement, every gesture – this is one way of dipping your intellect in awareness.

If your level of joy and aliveness is declining, you are committing suicide in installments.

The spiritual process is always a quest. *Seeking* means, you have realized that you do not know.

Karma (“external action”) is the process of binding you; *kriya* (“internal action”) is the process of liberating you.

If what your mind says is important to you, do not try *bhakti*. You waste your time at life.

Everything that you do with great involvement does something to you. But there is a difference between doing an inward focused *sadhana* and an outward *sadhana*. Anybody who’s doing whatever with absolute involvement can use it as a process of growth. But there is a distinct difference between doing external activity as *sadhana* and an internal process as *sadhana*. External activity as *sadhana* is useful because you can do it throughout the day. And of course, you have to do some activity – making that also into a process of growth is important. But the reason for internal *sadhana* which has nothing to do with the outside is to create the inner space within you, because your outside *sadhana* is subject to results, you can’t help it. If there is involvement with anything, this will become your *sadhana*. Involvement makes every act into a kind of growth, but still, creating an inner space is very important because that’s not subject to anything outside, any external reality. And that’s very important – that at least one aspect of your life is like this, is not subject to anybody’s appreciation, or approval, or whatever, but still you do it with absolute involvement. For you as a person, to do something which has nothing to do with anybody around you is an important act that you have to perform *every day*. It’s very important. If you do that well, it will be very easy to make your life’s activity into your *sadhana*. If this inner space is not there, life’s activity can slowly catch you up in such a way that after some time, it’s killing you. *First*, establish yourself within you; *then*, act – then, do whatever you want; then, no action is a problem. *First, establish yourself within yourself* – otherwise, you are using external activity to make yourself who you are, which will be disastrous. Because if you are using your activity to make yourself into something, and if something comes in your way which doesn’t allow you to become that, then you will be destroyed.

Right now, there is no experience of life. Largely, you’re just a bundle of thought, emotion, ideas, opinions and prejudices. Your psychological drama is being mistaken for life. Your own talk and emotion kept you so busy, you thought this is life. But when the moment of death comes, suddenly you know, the drama that you were turning on within you, this is not it. Your psychological reality has no existential basis. It is in this sense that people are telling you: “Be in the moment”, because there is no basis to your psychological reality; you can make

up whatever you want. Or, in other words: your petty creation has become larger than the magnificent Creation of the Creator. Spiritual process means, you set this anomaly right. The made-up world has become larger than the real world; just to correct this is spiritual process. If you can identify what is existentially true and what is not true, you will navigate your way through life effortlessly. If your mind and your body take instructions from you, being peaceful and joyful is not even an issue. If you had a choice, would you choose misery? No. Choose consciously. Right now, misery is happening compulsively. Once you get into the cycle, there is no other way – it rules you. Being human means just this: that you can consciously decide what is the nature of your experience right now. Being in a state of compulsive reaction means lack of evolution. This is the *animal nature*: they can't help it; that's the only way that they can exist; that is their nature right now. *Being human* means that everything animals do, you also do – the only thing is, the things which they do compulsively, we can conduct consciously; that's the big difference, isn't it? If you do not exercise that one thing, that you can conduct yourself consciously, it is a backwards step in the evolutionary process. So *spiritual process* means, a forward step in the evolutionary process. That means, everything is conscious for you; nothing is unconscious. And once it's conscious, you will conduct it the way you want.

You do not *desire* because of your life situation or because of the people in your life. If you were nothing to nobody in the world, still your desire would burn; anyway you will desire, because *that is your nature*. You cannot kill desire. If you want to destroy all your desires, all you will have is a great desire to destroy all your desires – and you will remain eternally unfulfilled. Desire is not desiring for anything in particular. The energy which you call desire is not different from the energy which you call life; the very basis of your life is desire. So, if I tell you, kill your desire, the only way is to hang yourself. *Desire is the very essence of your life*. Also know that desire is an unending thing: if you fulfill one, the next one will be ready; it keeps you on all the time. There is something in you longing to be a little bit more than you are right now: that is desire. So desire's ultimate goal is unboundedness, the infinite nature. But because you are unaware, you are giving it an unconscious (limited) expression. You have to make your desire into a conscious process. Right now, your desire is just a reaction to the social situation in which you're living. If you make your desire a conscious process, then desire is a wonderful process which will take you places. Even if you want to reach the Ultimate, you need a desire.

Whatever your path, carry *yoga* with you. You have chosen your path out of your needs: physical, psychological, emotional, social, financial. I would like you to choose your path not out of your compulsive needs, but out of your conscious needs. Consciously look at your life and see: will today's needs mean something to you in 5, 10, 20 years? Is it worthwhile to tie up your life, or are these just passing needs for you? It must be your conscious choice, not compulsive choices, or social obligation. If you choose compulsively, you will always take it out on the people around you, because you feel like a slave, and they will take it out on you.

If you want to conduct this life sensibly, then one of the most important things that you need to do is this: your psychological and your emotional framework should be around the basic fact of life, which is that you are mortal. If you are constantly aware that this is a brief life, then you will organize and conduct your life in a certain way. When you know that time is ticking away, then you have no time for foolishness. Your time is ticking even now, not after some doctor diagnoses you with some horrible disease. If you want to explore the possibility and the immensity of what *this* is, then time is ticking too rapidly. You think you are immortal – this is the biggest mistake that you have done. This is just a brief journey; you must conduct it as gracefully, as blissfully as possible. If you do not know the cosmos, at least you must know this piece of life before you fall dead.

Yoga as a process is essentially to break the limitations of a certain concretization that happens which we call personality, to evolve from being a *person* to being a *presence*. If you are a person, you have built a shell around yourself; you have identified with your compulsions. *Yoga* means, slowly you are working on making the shell thinner and thinner, more and more porous, so that one day you can exist without a shell. All aspects of physicality are cyclical in the universe. The more and more you identify with your physical system, the more and more cyclical you are also. *Yoga* means, on one level, to break the cycle of life. If you're going in circles, it just gives you an impression that you're going somewhere, but you're not really going anywhere. *Yoga* means to open up the circle and to stretch it out like a straight line, so that you can go somewhere. (...) Nature is not going to release you so simply. You have to work at it, and work at it, and work at it. The repetitive cycles of compulsiveness are coming because there are various kinds of memories in the system. Information essentially is memory. Karmic memories have constructed the body the way it is. To live in it and not to be of it will not come easy. The *sadhana* is just about this: if it is worked at every day, slowly one can see a certain level of freedom happening within you step by step, maybe inch by inch – slowly, it will be releasing you.

Only one who is at ease is capable of intense activity, because rest is the basis of activity. One who is constantly resting within himself is capable of endless activity; one who rests at certain times and acts at certain other times is always getting tired of activity. Life is at ease; only the mind is at some tension. The tension has come because mind is disaligned with life. You're trying to build your own creation and hold it up; you're trying to hold up that which doesn't exist. You're unwilling to live in the Creator's Creation; you're making up your own creation and trying to hold it up all the time – that is true torture. Your suffering is happening just because you are too involved with your own creation; you have no eyes for the Creator's Creation. There is no other reason.

Gratitude is not an attitude; gratitude is something that flows out of you when you are overwhelmed by what is being given to you.

Happiness has always been an internal phenomenon: the source of your happiness is inside you. But right now, though it is inside, the switch is outside, in somebody else's hands. The starter button is somewhere else: it is in the stock market, or in your wife's hands, or your children's hands, or the neighbor's hands – you've given it to everybody, except to yourself.

Every kind of thought may come up in your mind. You just look at it: what do you want to pick? Just like when you go shopping, you don't buy the whole shop, do you? They've got a million things, but you just buy what you want. Similarly, in the warehouse of your mind, there are a million things going on – you should only pick what you want. As long as you keep that much freedom, there is no problem with the content of the mind.

The moment you identify something as good or bad, you're just dividing the world.

If every moment, one is like a snake leaving the skin behind, only then there is growth. (...) In *this* moment, you really have no personality; do understand this – the personality you carry is a dead thing.

Wherever you are, do not divide your life (...). You have chosen to spend a certain amount of time in different areas according to whatever your needs are; now, once you have decided to be there, it's all life.

Your aliveness is going down because you are committing suicide in installments. The method of committing suicide is that you become selective in your involvement. Involvement does not necessarily mean physical action; involvement is just your willingness with life.

Circus is a hugely coordinated symphony of actions. And that is how the brain is functioning. The accumulated mass of information, which we generally refer to as the mind and its activity, is all coming from that accumulated information. This information has a basis beyond your birth.

The only thing that needs to be preserved in you is your physical body; everything else can be trampled right now and rebuilt the next moment, isn't it so? But no, you won't allow it. Your thoughts, your ideas, your emotions, your personality – if you are willing, we can just demolish it all right now, this moment, and rebuild it the next moment. But no. If I step on your foot, you will say it's alright. But if I step on your ideas, your emotions, your personality, you will be deeply hurt. That is your problem right now. The instinct of self-preservation is only for the physical body; the rest should be wide open to everything. But because of a strong identification with the body, you have made your personality also like a body, the mental activity also like a body, the thought structure also like a body, emotions also like a body. It is an emotional body, a mental body that you have, and they hurt more than the physical body. Isn't it so?

As long as your life and the experience of life is limited only to the physical and the mental, living with fear and being constantly security-oriented is unavoidable. It is inevitable; that's the only way you can live. So, if your experience of life transcends the limitations of the physical, now the physical and mental is still there in your life, but you are never a part of it. You can use it; you can enjoy it – but you never become that. (...) You can play with life any way you want, but life cannot leave a single scratch upon you.

Prarabdha is the allotted *karma* for one lifetime, because the stock of *karma* that you have, if all of it comes into one life, you can't live. You have a warehouse; this warehouse is referred to as *sanchita*. You can't handle the whole warehouse of *karma*, so a retail stock has been given to you to dispense with in this life. But generally, most people gather more new stock rather than to get rid of the old stock: in the process of getting rid of this much stock, they gather that much – so the cycle goes on and on and on. (...) So, when a certain awareness arises within you (...) because somewhere, the cycle has become meaningless (...) – when that awareness comes, that is when you will start talking about *mukti*. *Mukti* means *liberation*: you want to become free from the process of life and death.

If the life energies become overly intense, you cannot keep the body; if the life energies become too feeble, you cannot keep the body – only if the life energies are in a certain level of intensity, you can hold on to the body. If you raise the intensity beyond a certain pitch, you will leave. So these are the two types of *yoga* that you see in the world: one is withdrawing, so that you become feeble, so that you can go; another is revving up to a high pitch, so that intensity is so much that the physical cannot hold you anymore. So both ways, if it becomes too intense or too feeble, the physical cannot hold you anymore.

So if this consciousness arises and a certain intensity is picked up, or if the intensity is dropped beyond a certain point, you become unsuitable for living in the body. When that situation arises, there are possibilities for you to break the bubble completely. If you want to break the bubble and still retain the body, you need engineering. You need to know all the tricks, or you have to do some conscious *karma* to retain the body. (...) For example, Ramakrishna Paramahansa. (...) He was using food as a conscious *karma* to create a desire, a conscious desire. Every day, at least ten times a day, he has to think of food to keep the body going; otherwise, if he sits here like this, he will leave the body. He has planned out some work for himself, so he wants to hold on to the body for some more time. Like this, different *yogis* create different methods: some are simple; some are very complex – various kinds of process. Once the bubble is gone, and you are just keeping it consciously, in many ways, existentially you are not on account.

The transition body is referred to as the *etheric body*. (...) Ether is assumed as nonphysical, but it is not totally nonphysical. It is a transition between the physical and the nonphysical. What is nonphysical is never in your perception, unless you become that. What is physical can be brought into your perception. It is just a question of time and work to get everything that is physical in the existence in your perception. (...) If you do the necessary *sadhana*, all that is

physical in the existence can be brought into your perception. (...) What is nonphysical will not come into your perception – you have to dissolve into it; there is no other way.

Though every human being has the compulsiveness of the physical, he also has the consciousness of not being physical.

You are creating a whole range of illusions for yourself. Life should disillusion you somewhere; and it will – the sooner it does, the better.

The word *devotion* comes from the root word *dissolution*. A devotee has no agenda of his own; his only objective is to dissolve into his object of devotion, that's all. He is not thinking of living well; he is not thinking of becoming rich; he is not thinking of going to heaven: (...) you don't want life to go your way; you just want to merge with the Ultimate, that's all. If you are like that, devotion is the quickest way to realization.

The moment of death is a clear statement. You may pretend all through your life, but at the moment of your death, you cannot pretend. Death makes a clear statement about who you are.

The moment you say, "I intend to be spiritual", it means that you have long-term plans for your life. Your life plans are not just between birth and death; you're thinking beyond. That's what it means, isn't it? Once you start thinking beyond the body, it means: you have very long-term plans for your well-being; you are not willing to settle for short-term plans. If that is so, the most important thing is to at least establish a little piece of something in you which is beyond your body and your mind – if you don't have that, this place will be a huge suffering. So if you are suffering, you must know that you need to do some *sadhana* to establish something within you.

See, when you create your personality, it's created mostly unconsciously: just a small part of it may be conscious; the rest of it is all unconscious, isn't it?

In one way, what meditation means is, you're just withdrawing the support for your personality, that's all. Suddenly, it collapses: only then, the presence is there; the person is no more.

See, right now, you're stuck to one personality: it is just that your actions are different because the situations are different, but the person is the same. So the person is the same because *your personality has become you*: you are completely identified with it; there is no distinction between you and your personality, isn't it? *You have become that* – the mask has gotten stuck to your face; now, you can't take away the mask. If this mask has to come off, we need something to loosen the glue which has gotten stuck to it. This glue is the identity. So now, we're creating various situations where your identity dissolves in a certain way. Meditation, or any kind of *yoga*, or practice, is just to loosen the identity, so that there's a little more flexibility about it. Maybe the whole of it has not come off, but at least you can adjust it a little bit – instead of the mask being totally stuck,

at least you're able to take a little breather. That much break the practices are giving you, but if you work a little more at this, you can take the mask off and keep it aside. (...) So the whole point is to take off all the supports, because your personality cannot exist for a moment without your support.

The fundamental basis for your personality, the building blocks for your personality, is *likes* and *dislikes*: "I like this; I don't like that". A complex system of likes and dislikes is what your personality is, isn't it? See, what's the difference between you and the next person? Your likes and dislikes are different, isn't it? Now, the basis of *yoga* is just this: to help you go beyond these likes and dislikes. Whether we're talking responsibility or inevitability, or whatever else we're talking, fundamentally, it is to *destroy the process of likes and dislikes*. Existing in the world with likes and dislikes is a very foolish way to exist, but unfortunately, the logical mind thinks: "I'll do what I like; this is my freedom." The very basis of your bondage is in your likes and dislikes, but your mind makes you believe that doing what you like is your freedom, isn't it? (...) the moment you get trapped in these likes and dislikes, you have no discretion; you have lost your discretion: your intelligence is forsaken; your awareness is simply impossible once you get trapped in likes and dislikes. The moment you say, "I like this", getting identified with it is very normal – it's a natural process.

Depression means you are unable to maintain the exuberance of life in you; (...) you are imposing too much outside nonsense upon the inside; you have not done anything to keep your life energies high.

When you use the word *good*, it cannot exist without the opposite word *bad*. (...) The more and more you get identified with what you call as "good", the more and more you will resist what you call as "bad" – (...) the question is what you are identified with. The moment you identify yourself with something limited, you are in a natural conflict with the rest of existence; you cannot help it – when it will become violent is just a question of situations.

Karma is not deciding about what happens – *karma* is deciding about how you experience your life. The quality of your life is always decided by how you experience, not by what you have around you.

To have the awareness that we are only moving from one form of ignorance to another, is the greatest blessing that one can start with right now.

Self is not worth anything, and if to that which is not worth anything, you add esteem, that is a lot of trouble. And if, because of this esteem, this worthless thing becomes confident, that is real trouble. But for the sake of survival, people believed that unless you believe in yourself, you cannot survive. It is not true in an existential way, but people believe that, and it becomes true for them. Whatever you believe in, if you add sufficient focus and emotion to it, it becomes very real.

When you talk surrender, you are talking about passing from the limitations of one dimension to another. You knocked your head on the wall sufficiently; now you understand that unless you become like thin air, you will not pass.

If whichever way life is, that is the way you are, then you are one big *yes*, because life is all *yes*: everything is transacting with everything; it is just one big *yes*.

Compulsiveness simply means that you are not exercising your discriminatory intellect, that you are not aware enough to do that.

To live and to live totally, that is spirituality, so that you know life in all dimensions – you do not go just knowing a little part of it.

A *yogi* always wants to know the time and the date of his death ahead of time; he fixes it: many years before, he says, “On this day, at this time, I will leave”, and he leaves – because he has created the necessary awareness within himself to leave consciously, without damaging the body. Like you take off your clothes and walk away, like that you take off your body and walk away. If you can do that, that is the ultimate possibility in your life. Once you have gained this much awareness to know where you, as a being, and this physical being are connected – where the connection is, what is the hold – then you can disentangle yourself whenever the moment is right for you. (...) This is about being so aware that you know when life has completed its cycle and you walk out of it.

If you have the necessary intelligence to see that wealth is not about yourself, but about stretching yourself beyond your physical boundaries, then wealth is not a problem. But if you think wealth is a new way of fixing your boundaries, it becomes a problem. (...) If you see wealth as an opportunity to stretch yourself beyond your limitations, then wealth is not a problem at all – it will definitely lead to well-being.

The desire is just a longing to expand; it is not for any particular thing.

If your peacefulness and joyfulness is assured within you, then whatever happens or does not happen, this is the way you are. Then, desire is no longer compulsive: you can play any kind of game you wish; it will not take any toll on you. But if it is not so, if your inner well-being is not established and you are seeking well-being by fulfillment of desire, then it becomes a compulsory process.

There is something within you longing to become boundless, but your mind is drawing boundaries – so naturally, it creates a conflict. (...) It is the identity which creates such a restriction and suffocates a human being.

If you are doing this life with total willingness, this is your heaven; if you are doing this life with unwillingness, this is your hell.

Sat in Sanskrit means *truth*; and *sangh* means *to be in communion*. In other words, *satsangh* is a way of being in touch with truth; it means: to communicate with that reality which is beyond the reality you normally experience, to communicate with that dimension which is not in the day-to-day experience of life for most people. We should always be in *satsangh*; but because of our involvement with truth is part-time, at least one place should be dedicated entirely to it.

For most people, the day-to-day experience of life is just a bundle of impressions gathered through perceptions. (...) All the time, these transactions are happening through your five senses, either by seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, or touching; all the time, in so many ways, you are absorbing impressions of millions of forms of life and other objects around you. (...) How you transact or communicate with a certain aspect of life fundamentally depends on how you have done it before. What kind of impressions you gather is simply decided by the past impressions you have within you. In other words, in this way of perceiving life, there is no sense of freedom. This kind of perception is just a reinforcement of bondage, because you experience things only the way your mind is conditioned to experience them all the time. When we say *satsangh*, we are looking at being free from these impressions and this kind of perception; (...) when we say *satsangh*, we want to communicate with that which is true. A *satsangh* is that dimension where you are not trying to perceive something; you want to perceive yourself. (...) The very process of *satsangh* means that you go into a state where you do not exist, where you cease to exist as a person. (...) This is the very basis of everything that you can call spiritual.

You cannot become willing; only when you have no will of your own, you are truly willing. (...) to become willing means, not to identify yourself with the limited.

When your whole identification fundamentally is rooted in this little bit of flesh that walks about on this planet, then naturally you feel very, very inadequate. So, you have to prove yourself every moment of your life: people around you have to praise you and tell you that you are special, and constantly boost you all the time; otherwise, you feel lost.

Every device that is created needs to be overhauled periodically, because it gets corrupted over a period of time. Once people realize the mechanics of the device, the device will not function for them anymore. New devices have to be constantly created, because the device itself is of no importance – how well it works is all that matters. Now, you have got stuck with the limited idea of God also... (...) So, these devices for shifting your identification from one thing to another are tricky and dangerous sometimes.

All your problems, your suffering and your struggles in this world, have come only because you have constructed yourself as a person, unconsciously: you are an unconscious construction. Unknowingly, you did something and got stuck with it; you are unable to destroy it.

Unless there is pain, most people never look at themselves; they always look far away.

The *Dance of Destruction* is just shaking you up to a certain intensity of awareness.

So, who is that person whom you call a *guru*? He is not a person. The whole process of realization means that he has transcended the person and then carefully crafted his personality as it is necessary for the kind of role he wants to play in the world. (...) Every aspect of his life, he structures it as it is necessary for the role that he has chosen to play. It is a conscious construction; it is just a device, and it is not bondage anymore: any moment, he can just pull it down. (...) every day, I was building a new kind of person, because I was stepping into a new role – the earlier person could not have suddenly fulfilled that purpose.

So, the most important thing that a human being needs to do is to keep his intellect free of identifications. One should not get identified, even with the fundamental things, such as man or as woman, this or that. You are identified with your body, with your family, with your education, with your religion, with your nationality, with your race, with a million other things. The intellect should be kept free from this identification; that is when your intellect is like a sharp knife that cuts through everything and shows everything the way it is. Otherwise, everything gets distorted. Once you get into this judgmental thing, all kinds of things will stick to the knife; once too many things stick to the knife, this knife loses its penetration – then, it cannot show you life the way it is. So do not get into those judgments; there is no need to judge.

When a certain level of awareness arises in you, you suddenly know that little games do not satisfy you anymore. (...) When you have the awareness to see through various activities of life, the various compulsions of life, the various longings of life, when you see them as simply an endless rigmarole which does not really lead you to anything in particular, then the spiritual process can begin. You are in these endless games for fifty to sixty years, and they have not moved you an inch towards something meaningful. Either you go through life and realize it on your deathbed, or you realize it as you begin life, or you realize it when you are in the middle of your life and still have time on your hands. So the spiritual process has to begin somewhere, but the longing to go beyond the limitations in which you live is always there.

If the longing genuinely arises in you, when your heart really cries wanting to know, when you really know the pain of ignorance, then a master arises.

Life does not need meaning, because it is so complete by itself. (...) People who have found meanings to life have always moved away from life. Only by experience you will be in it, because life is not for you to explain or find meanings for – life is for you to experience and explore to the deepest core. How deep you go, that is how fulfilled you are. If you go to its utmost core, you will be dissolved; nothing of you will exist anymore.

The fundamental life that is you, if you can dismantle that completely and put it back together again, only then are you a *yogi*.

To go beyond the modifications of the mind is the most fundamental, and at the same time the highest achievement, because this releases a human being from what he is seeking, from what is within and what is outside, from everything. A human being becomes an ultimate possibility if he just stills his mind.

Whatever happiness and peace that one knows in one's life is generally so fragile that it is always subservient to the external situation. So most of your lives go into trying to manage a perfect external situation, which is just impossible to do. No human being is ever capable of creating a perfect external situation, because the outside situation will never be a hundred percent in your control, no matter how powerful a human being you are. So *yoga* focuses on the inner situation. If you create a perfect inward situation, no matter what the external situation, then you can be in perfect bliss and peace.

Only those who get enlightened on the path of *kriya* are usually capable of keeping the body. If they get enlightened some other way, they will have to use just desire – conscious desire – as a way to keep the body going. There is no other way.

A little sense of insufficiency, that is why you have come. When you feel absolutely, utterly insufficient, that's when you will know.

Life will not settle unless it knows itself.

If everything starts moving towards one purpose, only then something wonderful will come out of it.

Right now, the logical dimension of thought is filtering life through the intellect. The logical process has become so dominant simply because right now, perception is limited to the five senses. The very nature of sense perception is such that it always perceives everything in bits and pieces. It always divides everything into at least two; it never perceives anything as one. (...) So the moment you perceive everything through the five sense organs, the world gets divided. And only when there is a division, there is logic. If there is only one, there is no logic; only if there are two, there is logic. So the foundation of the logical mind is in dividing the world. And if you do not divide existence, you cannot employ your logic. So sense perception and logical thinking, or logical understanding, are directly connected; they are complementary to each other.

Do I have a problem? The answer is yes, because whoever you are, you want to be a little more than what you are. And when that "little more" happens, you want to be a little more than that – it is a problem, isn't it? In other words, you are attempting to become boundless.

Your mind always works around an identification. Once you are identified with something, you cannot help it. (...) The moment you are identified with something that you are not, you are an endless thought, a compulsive thought; you cannot help it. That is the reason why your thought process is going on endlessly, continuously. Many people are struggling to either stop their thought process or control their thought process. But you do what you want, you cannot control it: it is like you have eaten a bad fruit, and now your stomach is full of gas – you cannot stop it. (...) the moment you are identified with something that you are not, your mind is a compulsive thought process – you cannot help it. It is immaterial what kind of thought is running through your head. Whatever stuff you have inside, your mind runs that, because thought is compulsive.

Right now, you are a psychological process and a social process; you are not an existential process. When you say *myself*, you are not talking about the life that you are – you are talking about a bundle of thoughts, emotions, ideas, opinions, philosophies, and ideologies maybe, but that's all. Essentially, thought and emotion. If you make these two things unimportant, there is room for something to happen.

Divinity never forces itself upon you. If you are willing, it is always there for you; if you are not willing, it is not there for you. So all you need to do is create the right kind of willingness and receptivity. Just to bow down and not have a will of your own is the biggest receptivity; it is the easiest way to receive.

A *gnana yogi* means someone who uses his intellect to start with and then moves on to using his intelligence. The logical intellect cannot approach dimensions of the beyond because it is unable to grasp it. That is why we are referring to the beyond as *mystical*.

Whichever way you experience something, it is your *karma*. *Karma* means past information. Whichever way your information is, that is the way you see things right now. So your logic functions based on information. The very nature of information is such that it is always limited, no matter the volume of information you have gathered.

In the Vedantic philosophy, logic will rise to such a point that it will just freak you out completely – not using it like it is done usually, but really using it like a rocket, where it takes you to a place where it makes you dizzy and intoxicated. Then you realize that it is not getting you anywhere; it just causes dizziness in your head due to excessive use. Then you understand that the intellect can be used only to slice things open; it is not an instrument for seeing.

When we say *spiritual*, we are talking about a dimension which does not belong to this realm.

The problem is, people will forget God, but they will lean on something else.

The problem is, we play every game halfheartedly. If you play any game totally, you will break the limitations of your existence.

The spiritual process means that in some way you have liberated yourself from the bubble, that your individuality is no more a demarcated area. Once you are not within the demarcated area, on one level, we can say you are free. On another level, it is also a tremendous freedom to create anything that you want, because the very fundamentals of life are in your hands. (...) *So the essence of the spiritual process needs to be understood as a means to generate the necessary intensity to break the bubble, so that you are out of your individual nature.* It is not about being good; it is not about being ethical; it is not about being moral.

This is the reason why you dig your own well: so that you have water throughout the year. So whatever you are referring to as *true bliss* is just this: you have dug your own well into yourself and you have found water that sustains you all the time.

Many people went in search of freedom, but because they were not willing to put in what it takes, they chose drugs. It gave them a false sense of freedom. The problem is: the moment the effect of the drug is over, the presence of the trap is very strong. (...) Lots of people who went into ecstatic states in artificial ways ended up with broken minds, simply because they could not bear being trapped once again. Those who have always lived in the trap, they do not feel it so much. It is people who have known the freedom and come back, who feel it terribly. It is terrible to be back once again. Unless you have built your own ladder to climb out at will, just escaping by chance generally leads to broken minds: people get psychologically broken.

A dream is just a way of finding an outlet for all the unfulfilled desires that one has. When one is beyond desire, when one has desires only consciously, never unconsciously, then one is also free from dreaming. (...) Dreams are not about the new; dreams are just about recycling the old with new paint: your dreams are coming from the body of memory that you carry within you; nothing new happens.

If you understand where you and your body are linked, you can break the link when you wish. (...) If you know this, the point of this coupling, you can release it – gently. (...) When someone leaves his body consciously, he is truly no more. That is referred to as *mukti* or *liberation*: the game is up.

The nature of the mind is always to accumulate. When it is gross, it wants to accumulate things; when it becomes a little bit more evolved, it wants to accumulate knowledge; when emotion becomes dominant, it wants to accumulate people – the basic nature is, it wants to accumulate. Mind is a gatherer, always wanting to gather something. When a person starts thinking or believing that he is on a spiritual path, then his mind starts accumulating so-called spiritual wisdom. Maybe it starts gathering the *guru's* words, but whatever it gathers, until one goes beyond the need to accumulate... Whether it is food or things or people or knowledge or wisdom; it does not matter *what* you accumulate – the need to accumulate means that there is an insufficiency. This insufficiency, the feeling of being insufficient, has entered into this unbound

being only because somewhere you got identified with limited things that you are not.

If I erase your memory, then your family will disappear; your status will disappear; your business will disappear – everything that you own in the world will disappear, but still you are there, isn't it? So beyond all things that you identify yourself with, still there is something called *you*. (...) Now, if your focus shifts from what you are identified with right now to who you really are, then the other dimension can start opening up for you. Or in other words, the whole process of spiritual science, *yoga* in particular, is to somehow elevate you to an experience that is beyond the five sense organs.

The physical existence is just the peel of the existence. The fruit inside remains inexperienced, untouched by a large mass of humanity. Unless you taste the fruit of life, you will never know what life is. (...) Unless a person touches his interiority, unless a person transcends the physical dimension of who he is, and moves into that dimension which is the basis of his physical body, until then, he always remains subjugated to the external situation, because the body and the mind which you are identified with are things that you have picked up outside. They are not yours – they have the qualities of the outside; they don't have the qualities of who you are.

Your actions are not happening for food or comfort; they are all happening in search of fulfillment. Whether this has happened with awareness or without awareness, the actions indicate the search of unboundedness. (...) When a man has reached a state where, within himself, he does not have the need to perform any action, and his actions are only to the extent required for the external situation, then that man has become complete.

Religion is an inward step.

All beings are seeking dissolution, whether they are aware of it or not. Out of their limitations, fears and misunderstandings, they may think that they are not seeking it, but every being is seeking dissolution, always. (...) For someone who is seeking liberation, I want you to understand: what you are seeking is self-annihilation.

An unevolved person, if you give him something, you will only overburden him; you will only destroy his life. If you are concerned about somebody's ultimate well-being, you must put him through the painstaking process of evolving himself to a higher possibility, where he will receive higher dimensions of life, where receiving just happens to him because he deserves it. If you give a ton of gold to an ant, it will only crush the ant. So what you give, how you give, is very important – you don't just give because somebody is asking.

In the society, in the world, many people are like lions; but inside, they are like mice: they are constantly struggling with themselves – always. Whenever a person is placed in a situation which is beyond his wit or want, then that person will suffer so much insecurity and fear. Because of this fear in his mind, so many evil thoughts will arise. This happens every other day in the world; all the time it is happening: if you give somebody something which is beyond their want, if you give somebody something which is beyond their capabilities, if you give somebody something beyond what they deserve, then suddenly, they become so mean-minded – because somewhere inside, they are small; they have to put on a big act: now, they will start thinking all kinds of nonsense...

When you sit in a certain space, when you sit in a certain energy, if you notice a certain person or a place is creating a certain level of energy, and it seems to be a little bigger possibility than what you are, then that is the time when you don't think of anything, when you don't ask for anything – you simply sit. If you simply sit, you will get the necessary nutrient to evolve very fast, to mutate from one dimension into another. Once you grow into a certain possibility, everything that is possible in that dimension will anyway happen to you. If you do not grow into that possibility, but just aspire for that, then you are just bringing heaps of trouble upon yourself.

Because you like everything in installments, I am taking you for a ride in installments. But it will never happen in installments – it is whole or nothing; but your willingness comes in installments.

Seeking the Divine is not something that you have to start as a project now. From the moment of your birth, the seeking is happening, but unconsciously. It is just that the choice that you have is: either you can seek it unconsciously, or you can seek it consciously. If you seek it unconsciously, we can call it sex. One expression of unconscious seeking of the Divine is called sex – one expression of it. If it becomes a conscious expression, if your seeking finds a conscious expression, then we call it a spiritual process. Generally, if it is looked at as a science, then we say it's *yoga*.

Once your identification is limited to the physical body, then insecurity is the natural way.

If as a human being, you know suffering, then this is not because Creation gave the suffering to you – Creation just gave you the freedom to make whatever you wish out of yourself. If you're making suffering out of yourself, or if a large part of the population of the world has decided to make suffering out of themselves, that is their choice.

Right now, what human beings are suffering is not their bondage; no! – they are suffering their freedom. If you suffer your bondage, it's alright; but if you suffer your freedom, that's a tragedy.

Once you have come as a human, you're not trapped anymore. Other creatures are trapped in their own instincts; beyond that, they cannot think. You have instincts for survival, but still you have the possibility of going beyond these instincts. If you don't choose to go beyond, that means enough suffering has still not touched you; because unfortunately, in the world, very few people transcend out of their intelligence. Most people have to be trashed by life – only then they will transcend; only then they will think of going beyond – otherwise, no. (...) So they only seek the beyond when something really goes wrong with their life. Until then, even if something goes wrong, they will only pray for a better life next time.

Isha means: that which is fundamental, that which is the very source. (...) So *Isha yoga* is a method to turn inward and access the dimension which is the source of who you are. If you exist on the level of creation, as you are right now, you are subject to all the dualities of life. (...) The very purpose of *Isha* is your basic experience: you root yourself in that dimension which we are referring to as *Isha*, which is non-dual, which is the source of creation. But being rooted in this, you play with the dualities. Now, once you are rooted in the non-dual and play with the dual, the dual has no impact upon you – you can play with it and enjoy it whichever way you like, but it doesn't take a toll on you. If you are rooted in that dimension which is the source of creation, if one part of you is creator, another part of you is creation, you can play with creation whichever way you want, but it will not leave a single scratch upon you. But right now, in the single process of living, as people age, they become wounded.

Anybody who is sensitive to life is bound to be mauled by the dualities of life – always. Because you are not able to separate what is good and what is bad; you are not able to separate what is right and what is wrong; you are not able to separate what is evil and what is beautiful. (...) Only somebody who is blatantly lost in his moralistic nonsense believes he is pure-minded. Anybody who is sincere, looking at himself, he knows a part of him is utter filth. Nobody can avoid it. Only moralistic fools have closed their eyes to it; that doesn't mean they are free from it. So once you are sensitive to this, it will just destroy you; it will just eat you up. That is the very nature of life; life is made in such a way: the beauty of the creation is that the ugly and the beautiful are always together; what is filthy and what is sacred are always together.

Either you create your situations, or situations make you – these are the two ways to live.

If you do not know joy within yourself as a way of being, then you cannot be free from the fruit of action, because the fruit of action is the source of your joy.

If you use any external activity to create an inner situation, you naturally get enslaved to that external activity, and that becomes the condition for your joy.

So, if you are capable of making yourself joyful for one moment – I say “making yourself”, because you are either making yourself miserable or joyful – then you are capable of making yourself joyful all the time. The seat of your experience is *within* you, not outside of you – this is the fundamental shift in understanding that is needed for you to be joyful.

One of the main reasons why you have become miserable is that, instead of falling back into your joy, you are trying to pursue joy.

If you get entangled in the process of your body, entangled in the process of your mind, entangled in the process of your emotion, then there are a million reasons and ways to make yourself joyless and miserable right now. You can be joyless by just thinking about something, remembering something that was unpleasant, or even by creating something that may be unpleasant tomorrow. (...) There are endless ways to make you miserable – it is madness; that’s all.

Impressions can come, impressions can go, but joy does not come and go – (...) joy is the life source within you.

A thought doesn’t take you anywhere; a thought just makes suggestions – taking it or not taking it is up to you. (...) A thought never does anything; it only keeps coming and going.

The source of creation is within you right now, and that is joyfulness. If this fundamental source of creation finds expression in your life, if you allow it to move out, joyfulness is just the only way you can be: there is no other way to be, and you have no business to be any other way, really. Other states have become a part of you because you are not in tune with your own core. All the other states that you experience are your mind just going out of control. One knows misery in his life not because something has gone wrong with his life or because an external circumstance is creating misery. Outside situations can cause physical pain, but suffering and misery are always caused because your mind does not do what you want it to do.

Fundamentally, you started every activity in your life in pursuit of your joy; and on the way, you became so unaware that you don’t know why the hell you are doing what you are doing. That proves that whatever you consider a priority becomes more important than you being joyful, or making the atmosphere around you joyful. So you create unpleasantness both for yourself and the world around you. (...) So, it doesn’t matter why you are miserable – there is no such thing as why you are miserable; there is no other reason except that you don’t have any life sense.

The quality of your life will change not by changing the *content* of your life; it will change only by changing the *context* of your life.

The very purpose of putting a group of people together like this is to help you understand your *likes and dislikes*, which are the basis of all the limitations you have set for yourself as a person. Take a careful look at your personality: you will see, it is just a bundle of likes and dislikes. These likes and dislikes have risen from your enslavement to the duality of life, which is the bedrock of ignorance. The very word *yoga* means to transcend this duality and know the oneness of existence. Various devices have been used to help people go beyond this enslaving duality. You like or dislike something simply because somewhere deep down, you have identified it as either good or bad. Whatever you identify as good, you can't help liking; and whatever you identify as bad, you can't help disliking. This is why the Hindus created the personality of Shiva as a complex amalgamation of all that's beautiful, ugly, terrible, pleasant, good and bad. They made him the highest so that in accepting him, you accept everything: you transcend the limitations of your likes and dislikes and in turn, your dualities.

Once you are on a spiritual path, if you are genuinely on the path, you're not just obsessed; you are possessed. If you want to hit the peak of your consciousness, all the energy that you have has to be focused in one direction. If you're throwing it in ten different directions, it's obvious that you're not going to get anywhere, isn't it?

Right now, you're sitting here and a certain emotion may be building up within you in a very small way, and you're not aware of it. If somebody comes and calls you an idiot, you explode – now, you think you're angry. Please see: this has been building up, probably for days, weeks, or months, but it's not in your consciousness or awareness, because of your state of energy or the way you are. Many factors are involved. So what's happening within you isn't in your awareness. When what's happening within you isn't in your awareness, then the whole process of life is accidental, then your energy is accidental. And when your energy is accidental, you see: one day you're energetic; the next day you're not – it's just like this.

Once you enter the spiritual path, everything is in turmoil; everything is in question. You don't know where you stand; you don't know anything. Before knowing anything about spirituality, you were at least comfortable, self-satisfied. (...) Now, nothing matters: you don't feel like eating; you don't feel like sleeping; you don't feel like doing anything – because nothing is really worthwhile anymore. Actually, it never was worthwhile; you just deceived yourself into believing that it was. (...) The very fact that you're confused means that you didn't know, isn't it? You had made wrong conclusions, just for the sake of comfort and security. (...) Entering the spiritual path means: you have become conscious of your suffering.

Every human being, either consciously or unconsciously, through the process of what we call life, creates a certain image of himself, a certain personality. This image that you have created within yourselves has nothing to do with reality; it has nothing to do with the Self, with your inner nature – it's a certain image that you have built, most of the time unconsciously. Very few human beings have

built a conscious image for themselves; all others have built images according to whatever kind of patterns or external situations they fell into.

If the image is broken completely, if you shatter it totally, you are a realized being; but right now, the image doesn't break because the mind is still active – it just tries to modify the image a little bit, to adjust the image to a new situation. (...) "Shattering" means living without the image; "shattering" means dropping the image altogether. Changing the image is different: (...) it means that the underlying factor, the main aspect of your image, hasn't changed; (...) maybe a lot of things have changed, but still, the fundamentals have been retained. (...) if you are intelligent enough, if you are aware enough, you can recast your image to a totally new image, whichever way you want it, consciously. (...) When you drop it totally, another image won't be needed: you can just pick up things and drop things as needed; they won't stick to you.

Stagnation is a certain disease; it is anti-life. *Stillness* is a tremendous amount of life not manifesting itself in any way; it is just there – potent.

To be spiritual means, to be an emperor within yourself – this is the only way to be.

The way we think is the way we become: whatever you hold as the highest, naturally, all your energies get drawn towards that.

Just desire the highest in life. All your passions, direct them towards the highest. (...) Every ounce of energy that you have, every passion, emotion, thought – if they are focused in one direction, then the results can be very quick. (...) With half-hearted appeals, God never comes; with half-hearted appeals, realization never happens – it has to be everything; only then it can happen in one moment.

When a person has made Ultimate Reality the goal in his life, action becomes meaningless. And once action is meaningless, any kind of self-image is of no great significance.

Whichever kind of image you think is most harmonious, the closest to Divinity and the closest to realization, that kind of action you choose. Every moment, do it with tremendous intensity, without giving it a single moment's break. Then, a day will come when action is not needed anymore. A man who does not know action – real action, intense action – can never move into inaction; if you try to, inaction will just become lethargy. (...) In every waking moment of my life, unceasingly I pursue this work of offering myself, physically and mentally. Unceasingly I pursue it, twenty-four hours of the day, every waking moment and even in my sleep, with tremendous intensity. (...) That is the whole meaning of sacrifice.

Wherever you are put, you just do your work: it does not matter what the situation is; it does not matter what the result of your action is. (...) this releases you from the fruit of action. And once you are released from the fruit of action, the action will happen by itself. You don't have to stop working to be released

from action; simply, it will dissolve, melt and disappear. Once the expectation of the fruit of action is completely removed from your life, the action occurs by itself; you don't have to do anything about it.

The *karma*, through a process of bondage, is finding expression for you as a reminder of your emancipation. If you are unaware, you get entangled with it; if you are aware, it becomes the way to your liberation. For a person who knows his limitations, even if something comes up in life, he's not really affected; it doesn't really touch him. Let us say, somebody lost their child; now, these are simple people – if their child dies, at that moment, they feel something; the next moment, they leave it. There are other kinds of people whose child died ten years ago and even today, they are in turmoil: just the thought of it, and they find themselves in great turmoil. Yes, that is *karma*. (...) Only when a person consciously walks the spiritual path, then that person can definitely leave all of that behind. (...) Simply leave your load of bananas and go; it is very much possible.

If you are absolute acceptance, then whatever life demands of you, you do. If you have to fight a battle, you go and fight; there is no *karma*. The *karma* is not made in physical action; it is made only by volition. It's just that some fool has formed some rules and you expect every human being to live by them. It's impossible, but society needs such rules to maintain the social ego. Society has its own ego, isn't it? For every small thing, the whole society gets upset. (...) It's the social ego which is getting upset, and *your karma* is becoming part of the *collective karma*. (...) Your idea of good and bad has been taught to you; you have imbibed it from the social atmosphere in which you have lived.

That is what awareness means: there is no volition. Where there is no volition, there is no *karma*. You are simply doing what is needed; that is what acceptance means. That is what unbounded responsibility means, that you don't have any volition about anything. (...) You build *karma* only with volition; whether it is good or bad, it does not matter. The strength of your volition is what builds *karma*.

Choices made in unawareness are compulsions.

What is more important than dissolving *karma* is that you learn to stop creating new *karma*. If you don't create a new stock, the old stock will go in its own time; or if you are aware enough, you can drop it in a moment.

There is another dimension which is not physical. In that non-physical state, there is no memory; memory is only in the physical state. That energy, that *prana*, is still physical, just like electricity. Once you move into the non-physical, there is no memory, so there is no *karma*. (...) look at it in the way *yoga* describes the five bodies. The closest creation, the first creation, is blissfulness; then: from blissfulness to awareness; from awareness to energy; from energy to mind; and from mind to body – this is the simplest way of putting it.

Only when a person rises to another level of experience, their involvement with something else or somebody else goes to great depths without physical involvement – because now, identification with the body is receding; identification with the other dimension of yourself is building momentum.

Layers and layers of madness have been accumulated – it has to be worked out; there is no other way. Either you drop the whole thing and walk away, or slowly you cleanse the bag. The moment you lose your madness, if you really lose your madness, you are meditative. How else can you be? That's all meditation is. For a while, during meditation, you are bypassing your madness and experiencing a little bit of sanity: the mind settles down and you are just there – otherwise, the mind is going on non-stop – the moment you're out of your madness, you are always meditative; there is no other way to be. Your mind itself is madness; whichever way it is, it is madness – transcending that madness is sanity.

Once this energy starts maturing this way, now existence reclaims this energy. Actually, it is not that existence reclaims it; this energy is mature to a point where it cannot take on the limitations of any form anymore; so naturally, it merges with existence. To what extent your energies mature, that's what we're talking about. Or in other words, when we want to do a certain work; when, even if the energy is mature enough to leave, you still want to retain your body and perform certain activities – then you consciously create a certain amount of *karma*. You create a certain amount of sturdiness to your physical, mental, pranic and etheric bodies by doing certain *karmas* and *kriyas*. *Karma* is the way of bondage; *kriya* is the way of release. *Karma* is outward action; *kriya* is inward action – but both can be used either to bind or to release. Both internal and external action can be used either to bind you strongly, or it can be used to liberate you.

Once your energies reach a certain peak or a certain level of maturity, when holding on to the body becomes an effort, then you start doing *karmas* and *kriyas* to hold on to the body, because you have some unfinished work. (...) So this is the problem, or this is the situation that a realized being who continues to live always has: his energy is always disentangling itself; it cannot be associated with the body – but he is doing everything to keep it rooted in the body, because he still has something to do. What we are talking about, re-creation, is to re-manifest those areas of the *pranic body* which are destroyed. Another thing is to create the necessary *karmas* and *kriyas* within yourself to root energy into the body, so that this form of life can continue for a while longer.

No *karma* means no individuality; (...) no *karma* means no substance for individual process to happen – it has come to a point where you're almost like dissolving because the next quota has not been released yet.

What we're doing with *samyama* is this: you're not going into *prarabdha*; you're going into the *sanchita* aspect of your *karma* – you're bringing out, you are opening up the warehouse. That's the reason why, when a person walks the spiritual path, in many ways, if they don't handle the situation properly, then they will suffer much more than someone else, because they are bringing up

large volumes of it. (...) That is the reason why so much discipline was always brought into yogic practices, so that when things overwhelm you, you are able to handle that situation. Otherwise, if you open up things for which you are not ready, *karma* can just smother you completely.

Sadhana is done so that you create a certain sense of awareness and you're hastening the process of the dissolution of *karma*, so that your *prarabdha* gets finished faster and faster. If you dissolve some aspects of your *prarabdha*, generally you're working towards the mental and emotional dimensions of your *prarabdha*, so that you can live in a blessed state for a longer period of your life. If you dissolve them, your physical *prarabdha* is still there, so you continue to live, but without the struggles of the mind, without the struggles of the emotions. That's a blessed state. When physical *prarabdha* is over, the body will drop itself. The possibility of liberation is much higher.

[At death, the *physical layer of the body*] drops back here, because it was picked up from the earth. It has to go back there. The next one is the *mental body*. The grosser conscious part of the mind also, you drop here. It's only the karmic part of the mind that travels with you. So next is the *energy body*, or the *pranic body*, which is the *pranamayakosha*. This is still physical, like electricity is. That goes. This is why we are working on your *pranayama*, to make the *pranamayakosha* so vibrant that when it leaves this physical body, it still has a good existence, a mind of its own, some amount of choice. Once *pranamayakosha* is functioning by choice, not by compulsion, evolution is very quick. When your energies are just functioning unconsciously, they function one way; but when your energies become a higher level of consciousness or awareness, suddenly you have a choice. Now, where you need to be born is your choice. Destiny slowly begins to come into your hands if your energies are completely aware.

As I have been telling people, do not mistake mental alertness for awareness. That is not awareness. If you look at it that way, the birds are more aware than you are, isn't it? Physically, they are more mentally alert than you are. If a snake comes here, you will not know, but if you just put your foot down here, all the snakes within one hundred meters will know. So they're more alert, both mentally and physically. That alertness is only useful for survival – you'll survive better, but that's not the awareness we are talking about. If your energy becomes aware, your life begins to move from compulsions to choice. That's the first step you have to take, to move your energies into higher levels of vibrancy. How you get there is not the point. You may get there singing, dancing, breathing, or you may get there with your love, whichever way. If your energies are high, in a high pitch of vibrancy, your life naturally is no longer a compulsion. Everything slowly becomes by choice, to such a point that death and birth become a choice.

The spiritual body and bliss body cannot hold form by themselves, in the sense that they have no structure of their own. Only because there is a karmic body – which has manifested itself right now in your physical body, in your mental body and in your energy body – only because of *karma*, the other two inner bodies are there. If you take away the karmic body, even the mental body and the energy body cannot hold themselves. That's why we're calling *karma* the only bondage:

if you remove that, your other bodies will just spill – like if you're carrying fluid in a plastic bag, and if the bag bursts, then it's all over, finished, back into the ocean.

Once the karmic substance is taken away, the karmic bag just goes. It is the karmic substance which is giving you the sense of individuality; the individual experience is there only because of the karmic substance. Even now, when you're in the physical body, if you just forget your karmic structure for one moment, you will not know who you are on the level of the mind itself.

If your concern is your liberation, you just learn how to dissolve that which binds you.

When the moment of death comes, no matter what kind of life you may have lived, it gives you an opportunity to settle certain things. A certain space is created, no matter what kind of karmic baggage a man carries. (...) In India, when people who are a little aware want to die, they always go away from their family; They want to die in a space of non-attachment.

Spirituality means, you realize that you are just a little bit of energy caught in your karmic structures. Just remove the *karma* and the energy falls back to what it was.

The moment you become conscious of the boundary, you want to break the boundary – such is the nature of the human being. This longing is there in every human being; this is the nature of life itself: every human being is longing for expansion. Will they be longing for it consciously or unconsciously? That's all the choice is.

Our activity is always about the times in which we exist; it's not about us really.

The nature of life is such that, every moment, it is changing and evolving into something else; the nature of the existence is such that nothing can be stagnant here – it is only the dynamic nature that is keeping life going.

All human experience happens from within you, and at least what happens within you must happen in the way you want it.

You have an intelligence for which you don't have a stable enough base. The only reason you suffer is that your own intelligence has turned against you. It is like you've been given a sharp knife and you don't know how to handle it – every day, you keep cutting yourself, and you think that there is something wrong with the knife. No! – the problem is: you don't have a steady hand.

You're not seeing the world the way it is; you're seeing it the way it is projected within you.

Essentially, our life is just a certain amount of time and energy.

You're still not able to define yourself, isn't it? Whatever definition you put on yourself is not correct. Whatever definition you put on yourself, it is not enough to describe *this one*. The Source of Creation, you cannot define it; you cannot understand it – you can only dissolve into it. You can *experience* it, but you can never *know* it; you can't make knowledge out of it. Whatever knowledge you have about God is just pure nonsense, cultural nonsense. Depending on which culture you are in, that kind of God you have, isn't it? The Source of Creation can only be experienced by dissolving into it; there is no other way. So we are just looking for methods of dissolution, so that we can experience something far bigger than ourselves.

If you create any tension in your body or in your mind, you don't need another enemy in your life. You will just slowly work against yourself; you'll turn your own life energies against you. You're inviting a whole host of problems in the world, because in what way you reverberate, accordingly you draw those types of situations to yourself, those kind of people towards yourself, those kind of ultimate reserves to your own life. If you want to create life the way you want it, you need to take charge of certain fundamentals – otherwise, you're just working your own energies against yourself. The Source of Creation must always be working *for* you; if it works against you, you're finished. To create life the way you want it, it is very important to attend to first of all the body, then the mind, then the energies; it is very important that these things are attended to with utmost care.

If anything happens that you think should not happen, you will suffer. You want the whole existence to happen the way you think it should be. It will never be so. In what form it comes to you, it does not matter – your demand is just this: existence should happen according to your will. It will not happen that way.

Your goodness is always in comparison to someone else or something else. If you want to be really good, you have to make everybody else in the world not okay. If nobody is okay in your world, then it's not a question of goodness; it just means you're sick in your head – that's what it means. Your goodness is just a kind of madness.

If you forget for one moment that you're mortal, the ignorance will sprout. To ignore mortality is ignorance. Very few can give back the soil that they picked up from mother earth gracefully. Carry it gracefully; when it's time to put it back, put it back gracefully.

There are two fundamental forces acting within every human being. One is the *force of self-preservation*: the instinct of self-preservation is constantly striving to build walls of protection around itself. And the other force, the *longing to become boundless*, is constantly striving to push you beyond the boundaries within which you exist. Every kind of desire is essentially the play of these two forces. Once you make the mistake of identifying yourself with something limited, the instinct of self-preservation wins, hands down – it almost makes it look like the other force doesn't even exist. Once you're identified with something, you cannot think of anything else. Once you have a limited identity, everything in you builds walls

around it; there is no other way. All *sadhana* is essentially aimed at expanding the limitations, breaking the boundaries of one's energies. So *sadhana* is pushing you one way; if your mind is pegged down to certain things, you are unnecessarily creating a tension within the system. If your energies are split – one building walls, the other breaking walls – then this is a wasteful way of living. The important thing is that you are not building new walls. Old walls can be made to crumble, but the problem is the new walls that are coming up every day.

If you have the right kind of eyes, everything is absolutely beautiful. If you're in a certain state of joy and you look at anything, everything is beautiful. When you're unhappy, only certain things are beautiful – other things are ugly.

A certain amount of life energy – that's all you are, isn't it so? Identified with many, many things – but fundamentally, you're just a certain amount of life energy.

Devotion means, taking your emotion to its highest pitch. Devotion is the quickest way to attain. But you won't fit into normal social situations; it's not possible. If you want to preserve external realities and still evolve, then naturally there are compromises; you go slow, just pushing it to the next level of experience. A moment of devotion may happen, and it's very beautiful. But devotion and corporate world will not go; devotion and family life will not go – devotion and *anything* will not go. Devotion means: everything else has to dissolve.

Most people cannot meditate unless they exhaust their *karma* on activity within themselves. *Karma* has to find its release; and if you don't give it constructive work, it will find its release in all kinds of perversions. The best thing is to get into that kind of activity that will wear you out. It's very important that the *karma* or energy that is allocated for activity is expended as quickly as possible, so that stillness becomes a reality.

If you've given yourself without love in your heart to any aspect of life, you are an adulterer.

Only what you're aware of exists for you. Right now, you're only aware of a small aspect of your life. Spirituality means, to become aware of everything that you are so that, before you go, you know and experience life in its totality, in all its dimensions. To live and to live totally, that's spirituality. If you are like this: inside you are fully charged; outside you are controlled – this is what is needed to experience life in its totality. This is how it should be: every moment of your life, inside of you is like an absolute explosion; outside of you is properly controlled. When it's like this, you will get to use your physical body, your mind, your emotions, everything that you have, to its fullest extent, simply because your voltage is full.

No moment in the existence is perpetual, but that which is still is for always – it's from the stillness that the moment has originated. All that you generally know as life is the surface reverberance, but once you have the taste of stillness, if you wish you can play the surface, otherwise you can just fall back. If you do not know the core, your life is in some kind of compulsive movement. It does not matter how exciting you find life right now – one day you will tire. If you're tired and die, it's not the right way to go. So meditation is not an option. If you don't know how to be still, you can only be ill – there's no other way. If one looks at life closely enough, diving deeper into it is a natural process; touching the core of it is a success. One is successful only if he finds fuller expression to all that he is, and that will never ever happen without one becoming meditative. If you don't even know who you are, finding full expression to that is out of question.

You should not pursue anything intensely; there is no need to pursue anything intensely. If you're saying, "I'm pursuing something intensely", probably what you're trying to say is: "I'm pursuing something madly". There is no need. *You* should be intense. You must see how to raise the intensity of your being, your mind, your way of existence. If you make this very intense, anything that you do will be naturally intense. But if you try to do something intense, one thing is, you may end up doing it senselessly; another thing is, you'll exhaust yourself and expend yourself too quickly. If you make this one absolutely intense through the life process, then, with every action that you do, there will be ease and intensity at the same time. Without ease, if intensity comes, you'll burn yourself out.

If people want to have a love affair which brings them to an ultimate union, then not many people are competent to do that. Most people are competent of using love to fulfill their domestic needs; but to go beyond that, they are not ready. In order to fall in love, you have to fall. You need to have the sense of falling, of abandoning yourself; that's the beauty of the love affair. You just sit here and you're willing to die; that's when you become a devotee. A devotee does not mean expecting either to become somebody else's doormat, or to wear a crown on one's head. Whatever I become, as long as I can touch my Beloved, that's fine with me. Devotion means, it's your intention to dissolve into the object of devotion. That's a different state of existence. I don't think someone who is looking for a domestic level of love affair should even ask that question.

You need to understand: the moment you identify yourself with something that you are not, your thoughts are on. The more you identify, the more strongly you identify, the more the thoughts are, the more vigorous the thoughts are. It is just like: you ate bad food, now you have gas – you can't stop it; it cannot stop. Trying to stop gas will be foolish; you must stop eating bad food. You have identified yourself with things you are not; you have gone away from your original nature. If you do not identify yourself with anything, then the thought process cannot go on. Once you become a nobody, where is the question of thought? When you're a nobody, what is there to think about? Nothing. Thought will be a conscious process: if you want to think, you can think; otherwise, it's just a blank.

Your experience of who you are is non-sufficient; that's why all this nonsense is happening. Your identification is always with something you have gathered (the food-body, the impressions, the things and people which you possess) – this is your compulsive hobby. The moment you get trapped in the body, survival becomes the fundamental and foremost interest in our life, because the body constantly needs to protect itself; there is a deep-rooted instinct for survival. Only the body needs protection for survival, but your identification with the body is so deep that the need for protection has spread into other areas of life.

Please understand: the moment you set this process of “*I like this*” / “*I don't like that*”, you have divided the world. “No, no, I don't like this, but it's OK with me” – there is no such thing! The moment you don't like it, all the negative in you starts flowing in that direction. The moment you create like and dislike, you have divided the world. Once you have divided the world, inclusion doesn't happen – only exclusion happens. Exclusion is the way of the ego; the ego is always trying to be exclusive. All the advertisements are telling you that a given product will make you exclusive. Being exclusive means, you're trying to be special – and if you're trying to be special, this means that right now, you're feeling insufficient. When you're all-inclusive, you're not in conflict with anything; now, your intelligence becomes a pure force. You can employ it whichever way you want – it becomes absolutely conscious. (...) Because there are conflicts, you cannot become conscious. But if you don't identify yourself with this or that, if you are simply here – now, you have no conflict: then, life becomes very simple; then, everything in the world falls into its right perspective. (...) If you are so ordinary that you have no need to be special, then you are extraordinary.

What is *brahmacharya*? *Brahman* means *the Ultimate, the Divine*; *charya* means *the path*. Being on the path of the Divine means, you're seeking to be joyful by your own nature, ecstatic by your own nature. When you're really joyful, it sets you free: nothing matters when you're happy; but when you're unhappy, then about everything you will complain. If you seek joy outside, you end up becoming a pleasure seeker. The source of happiness is within you, but you are using an external stimulus to bring forth the joy in you. If you put self-start on your joy, then you are a *brahmacharya*. Celibacy is just one of the supportive systems which are taken up to become a *brahmacharya*. Those who want to source their own joy have taken up *brahmachary*.

Everybody is in search of joyfulness, knowingly or unknowingly. Because you could not find joy, you settled for pleasure. Pleasure is just a shadow of joy – it's beautiful, but it's very limited. Whenever you want to have pleasure, you need something or somebody to have pleasure, to extract pleasure from. And the deeper you go into pleasure, the deeper your bondage with this something or somebody – so your existence becomes that of huge bondage. Bondage is not something that any human being enjoys. There is something within you which is always wanting to be free from all bondage, isn't it so? If you become a pleasure seeker, you're setting up limitations in such a pleasant way that you cannot transcend them: unpleasant limitations, you can break them; pleasant limitations, you cannot break them. Seeking pleasure means, you're celebrating

your limitations; and once you're celebrating your limitations, there is no way to become free of them.

Your nature is such that it cannot settle for anything limited, because it is seeking the unbounded. If you settle for the limited, tomorrow you will be frustrated. Your desire is always to become unlimited.

A mystic is someone who is coming from his inner understanding and inner experience.

If you have not seen enough of life, then you are hankering for life. If you have seen it all, then you want to move on to the next. (...) Spirituality is normal – if you are not spiritual, you are handicapped.

We carry a dream in our hearts and give our life to the dream; that's what makes our life beautiful. Whether it becomes true or not is not the point. We live for something that we dreamed as the ideal in our lives; we live for a dream – that's what makes everything beautiful for us in our experience of life.

If human beings do not take it upon themselves to make their own destiny, they still have an evolutionary problem – they are still not really there. Because being human means that we can conduct our life consciously, that we can craft our life the way we want. But this “destiny business” is a good insurance to handle your failure: whenever you fail – “it's my destiny”; “it's the gods' will”. No! Your life is *your karma*; this means: your life is *your* making – there is no interstellar influence on you; it's *you*. What is thrown at us, what comes our way is not in our hands; but what we make out of it is 100% in our hands. If they throw stones at you, it's up to you to build something out of it.

Never look down on anybody; never look up to anybody. In your mind, you decided what is good, what is bad, what is high, what is low, what is virtue, what is sin, what is filth, what is wealth – everything. Everything is already determined. Once you've done this, there is no way you can *not* look up to something or down at something. If what you think is bad, you look down; if what you think is good, you look up. If you just learn to look at life for what it is, you will effortlessly navigate through your life.

You become transparent. If you're transparent, every dimension of life can go through you, but leaves you untouched.

If you do not do what you can't do, that's not an issue; but if you do not do what you can do, you're a disaster. It's a brief life; it's a limited amount of time for the human potential to flower. In this life, everything that you can do must happen.

After thousands of years of evolution, we have come to a space where our evolution has to be conscious.

At present, you cannot evolve physically, but you can evolve consciously.

Mukti – liberation – does not mean you go somewhere. Liberation means you're here, doing life in full intensity, but life does not leave a single scratch upon you – this is liberation.

All the things we have created on this planet have essentially first been created in our minds. All that you see which is human work on this planet first found expression in the mind; then it got manifested in the outside world. (...) So it's extremely important that, first of all, we learn to create the right things in our mind. If we do not have the power to keep our minds the way we want to, what we create in the world is also going to be very accidental and haphazard. So learning to create our minds the way we want is the basis for creating the world the way we want. (...) In *yoga*, we refer to an unestablished mind as a monkey. What are the qualities of a monkey? One thing is unnecessary movement; another thing is imitation. (...) A well established mind is referred to as a *kalpavriksha* – a wishing tree. If you organize your mind to a certain level of organization, it interorganizes the whole system. Your body, your emotions, your energies – everything is organized in that direction. Once these four dimensions of you – your physical body, your mind, your emotions and the fundamental life energies – are organized within one direction, once you are like this, anything that you wish happens without you lifting a little finger, actually. It will help to assist it with activity, but even without activity you can still manifest what you want if you organize these four dimensions in one direction and keep it unwavering in that direction for a certain period of time. Right now, the problem with your mind is: every moment, it is changing its direction. The question of you reaching your destination is very remote, unless it happens by chance. (...) If you want to become empowered, it is also very important that you become responsible for what you ask for and what you don't. (...) We are not acting consciously; we are in a compulsive state of action. So organizing our minds fundamentally means, moving from a compulsive state of activity to a conscious state of activity. (...) The moment you're saying "not possible", you're also saying "I don't want it". So, on one level, you're creating a desire that you want something; on another level, you're saying "I don't want it". So in this conflict, it may not happen. Faith only works for people who are simple-minded. In the mind of a simple-minded, childlike person, there are no negative thoughts: Will it happen? Will it not happen? Is it possible? These things are completely removed by the simple act of faith. (...) How you think – with how much focus you think, how much stability is there in your thought, how much reverberance is there in the thought process, whether or not you create any impediments in the thought process – will determine whether your thought will become a reality, or whether it will be just an empty thought. What is possible or not possible is not your business; it's nature's business – your business is just to strive for what you want. (...) You're using the past experience of life as a basis for deciding whether something is possible or not possible. Or in other words, you have decided that what has not happened until now cannot happen in the future. This is a disgrace to humanity and the human spirit. What has not happened until now on this planet *can* happen tomorrow; human beings are capable of making it happen tomorrow. So what is possible and what is not possible is not your business – that is nature's business; nature will decide that. You just see, what is it that you really want, and then you strive for that, and if your thought is created in a

powerful way, without any negativity, without any negative thoughts bringing down the intensity of the thought process, it will definitely manifest. The whole existence today, science is proving, is just a reverberation of energy; it is a vibration. Similarly, your thought is also a vibration: if you generate a powerful thought and let it out, it will always manifest itself. So generally, people are using faith as a means to remove the negative thought. Today, once you have become thinking human beings, it does not matter how much faith you think you have, somewhere doubts always crop up. (...) With this kind of mind, you should not waste your time on faith. So there is an alternative, which is commitment. If you simply commit yourself to creating what you really care for, your thought gets organized in such a way that there is no hurdle in your thought process – your thought flows freely towards what you want. Once this happens, making it happen will also naturally follow. So to create what you really care for, first and foremost thing is that what you want must be well manifested in your mind. Once you can maintain a steady stream of thought without changing direction, it will definitely manifest as a reality in your life. So either you make this human form into a *kalpavriksha*, or you make it into one big mess. (...) Because we have lost our power to create, we are making a mess of ourselves and the world around us. If we were operating as the true creator, as it is operating in us, as it is creating this body for us, if we could create our life with the same sense of organization and sense of purpose, this world and the human beings would be in a completely different state.

I want you to understand: genetics are only information. You can use information in order to get better, or you can use information in order to go back into the same cycle – it's up to you. Information is empowerment, or information is entanglement, depending on the way you use it, isn't it.

Seeking is possible only when a deep "I do not know" has happened within you. If a vacuum of "I do not know" happens within you, then *sadhguru* will happen to you – you don't have to search. And you don't know how to search.

[About education:] What you pursue, you will never forget. What is imposed upon you will never be useful in your life.

That's all you must do in your life: constantly look for ways to enhance your perception and your intelligence. The rest will anyway happen. (...) Success is only when you are able to use yourself to your full potential. You are living your life to your full potential – that's what success means. If that has to happen, you need perception and an active intelligence. How do I grow my intelligence? Don't worry about that. Right now, the important thing is to enhance your perception. If you are able to see life just the way it is, you will have the necessary intelligence to conduct it well; if you're not able to see life the way it is, your intelligence will work against you. The most intelligent people on this planet are generally the most miserable people on the planet – this is simply because they have an active intelligence, but no perception of life. If you see everything just the way it is, without distortions, life becomes a play; you can play joyfully, you can play it well for sure. (...) You should not be aspiring for success; it's a miserable way to structure your life. You will simply cause pain and suffering to

yourself, and suffering to everybody – because your idea of success is sitting on top of somebody's head, isn't it? Your idea of success is right now: everybody should be below you; you must be on the top – but this is not success; this is sickness.

To become receptive for grace – that's the most significant thing, that is the most important thing in your life: to become available to grace. If that one thing is not there, this is an uphill task, quite an impossible task, a very torturous journey.

I don't see what's the point in anyone making the process of life unpleasant for themselves. (...) This one thing every human being deserves; all other things according to their capabilities. This one thing must happen; other things, we don't know. So, you must be a volunteer, always. *Volunteer* means you're doing your life willingly. This is all the choice you have: you can either do your life willingly or unwillingly. If you do it willingly, it becomes an offering; if you do it unwillingly, it becomes a rape. So being a volunteer means learning to become willing in all kinds of situations, every moment of your life. Only if you are willing, you become available to grace.

Devotion means that you are the way you are, that your way of being is not anymore determined by who is standing in front of you. Everything else, other ways of behavior, always is determined by who's standing in front of you right now, and what kind of situation you are in right now. Devotion means that somebody's there, nobody's there, whoever is there, whatever the situation, you are still the same person. This is the best way to establish your way of being. (...) Devotion is that which is devoid of you. There is no sense of *me* when you are devoted. If you genuinely bow down to everything that you see, inside and outside of yourself, then you will see there's no such thing as *you* left. When you're devoid of *you*, you're always the same. Whether the man comes begging to your house or whether the man has a gun, you will always be the same way. If that firmness is not brought into your life, how can you be taken somewhere?

You can only be devoted to something which you hold way above yourself. Devotion cannot be practiced; it cannot be cultivated or cultured. When you're overwhelmed by something or somebody, when you see something or somebody way above yourself, far beyond yourself, then naturally devotion comes – very naturally. (...) An addict can hide his addiction, but a devotee cannot hide his devotion. (...) A devotee is very intelligent; there's a very deep, profound sense of life involved in his devotion – the devotee has *understood*. (...) A devotee does not have to think about his well-being, because he has found his well-being. (...) Addiction shrinks you and destroys you; devotion enhances you, expands you, makes you all-inclusive – that's the big difference.

When you sit here, you're not mostly receptivity; you're mostly your own mind, isn't it? When you're mostly your own mind, you need guidance, but if you're all receptivity, you don't even need a master, I'm telling you – because: grace is all over you. (...) But when you are full of mind, you need another mind, cleverer than yours, constantly fixing you.

For one to grow beyond his limitations, for one even to strive to do so, the compulsiveness should go. One fundamental dimension of compulsiveness is your own *karma* which wants to find expression; it will not spare anybody. So the best thing is to exhaust the *karma* with immense activity, so that you can say: “there is nothing compulsive in me” – you sit here and you *just* sit here; that’s all.

The naming of a child today has become the whim of the parents according to the passions of the times, for social and practical reasons. But a name is not just a way of calling a person, but a way of opening a person, just by uttering a name. The real name of a child used to be given by someone who knows what is the fundamental reverberation of this little child.

If this hidden sound (the fundamental reverberation of a child) finds expression, then this is like a key to everything. It is only in allowing the hidden sound to flower and find expression that this child will give full expression to his life. Otherwise, it will remain a seed that never sprouted, while many things happened on the surface – that’s not it. (...) If you want to have deeper access to life, you must listen to the reverberations, not to the surface. (...) So when the music is on, I want you to behold the sound, not the music.

You set yourself into the process of *yoga* because you don’t want to be this kind or that kind of person – you will be the kind that you require to be in a particular moment; you become flexible. Flexibility should come to every aspect of your life: your physical structure, your psychological structure, your emotional structure, your karmic structure – everything should become flexible, so that it can be whatever it is required to be. So *yoga* as a method is essentially to break the limitations of a certain concretization that happens, which we call as personality; *yoga* means, to evolve from being a person to a presence. If you’re a person, that means you have made a shell out of yourself, and within that shell only you can operate. If you break that shell, you will no more be a person, but you will be a presence, as life is, as God is. If it can be encased in a shell, it becomes a person. So *yoga* means, slowly you’re working on making the shell thinner and thinner, more and more porous, so that one day you can exist without a shell.

All aspects of physicality are cyclical in the universe. The more and more you identify with your physical system, the more and more cyclical you are also; even the situations that you face in your life come in cycles. So *yoga* means, on one level, to break the cycle of life: what is a circle right now, we want to open it up and make it a straight line, so that if you follow the line, you’re going somewhere; you’re not going round and round. Because if you’re going in circles right now, you’re not going anywhere. It just gives you an impression that you’re going somewhere, but you’re not really going anywhere – you’re going through the same thing again and again. Stop your *sadhana* for three months and see – your compulsions will suddenly come back if you break the *sadhana*, because nature is not going to release you so simply. You have to work at it and work at it and work at it – otherwise, you must be happy doing the circle, or should we say, the circus. Only if your vision is limited, everything seems real. So these repetitive cycles of compulsiveness are coming because there are various types of

memories in the system. Essentially, any type of information means memory; there is no other way any information can stay anywhere. If this memory was not there, your body wouldn't even take a form. Memory means, only that which belongs to the past. If memory, the information which you carry, is the only thing that determines which you are right now, that means: you belong to the past; you *are* the past – there is no real life; it's just a play of memory. If you go to the cinema, it's so big and so real, more real than the real; it becomes a bigger reality than reality, because it is so exaggerated. But all this is just digital memory being played out; it's already over. So you're trying to live that which is over. *Yoga* means, to liberate yourself from that information which determines who you are right now – that information should not determine how you think, feel, experience your life; but unfortunately, it does. *Sadhana* means, to slowly, gradually, create a distance from that information. Do not forget – if you forget, you will do the same stupid things all over again. This is not about forgetfulness, but about being able to carry. If your memory sticks are all of the time plugged in and all of them playing, you go crazy. When you want to use your memory, consciously you can activate it; otherwise, it lies there. Then, once the freedom comes, memory is not a problem. A broken record playing over and over will not allow you any perception; and unless you perceive life in larger and larger ways, there is really no experience of life. So, *yoga* means breaking the cycle.

Consciousness is an intelligence beyond your physiological and psychological structure. If a dimension of intelligence exists within you, if you touch that dimension, your identity naturally will be with that dimension. Right now, the only problem is: human experience is limited to their biology and mind; physiological and psychological structure are the only two things which you experience. Because of this, identification with the body and the mind has become such a big deal. (...) Human suffering happens only at two levels: physiological suffering and psychological suffering – there is no other kind of suffering. Once there is a distance between you and your body, you and your mind, then this is the end of suffering. This must happen not at the end of your life, but at the very beginning of your life, because the fear of suffering is what has crippled humanity. A human being has not explored the full depth and dimension of who they are simply because of fear of suffering: "what will happen to me?" is always the concern. If you come to this kind of ease: "whatever the hell happens to me, this is how I will be"; if this assurance and ease came into your life, then you would explore life in many more ways than you are doing it right now, isn't it so? This needs to happen. If we want to unleash human genius on this planet, the fear of suffering has to go. For that to go, you must touch something beyond your physiological and psychological structure.

There is something within you which does not like boundaries. It does not matter where I set the boundary – the moment you can feel the boundary, you will want to break it. But you cannot become boundless through physical means. Without boundaries, there can be no physicality. (...) That's what consciousness is, an intelligence that creates the physicality.

95% of the prayers on this planet are just about: "Dear God, give me this, give me that, save me, protect me". So, does it seem like a divine process to you, or does it seem like survival process outsourced? To survive on this planet, you don't need any divine help. Any plant and any animal on this planet can survive. Only when your life is beyond survival, you're looking for other dimensions of existence; then, you will need the cooperation of other forces. Prayer, as a process, unfortunately has become a talking process.

The word *meditation* is not specific to anything; it's a general term. If somebody sits here with eyes closed, we say they're meditating – but with eyes closed, you can do many things.

Everybody has desires. Desire is an incremental way of enhancing our life. When you're saying: "I'm a visionary", what you're saying is: "I have a larger desire". *Desire* is about me always; it's incremental personal improvement. *Vision* is an all-inclusive process; it can transform the whole situation.

There are joyful people and miserable people; but there are no good people and bad people. The moment we think we are good, we feel entitled to destroy the bad, isn't it? Human beings are in different levels of experience and understanding. Anybody who is not like you is obviously bad, isn't it so? Because the basis of goodness and what you think is goodness is decided by you. No, you have no business to do that.

Willing means this: I'm a 100% *yes* to life; I'm not *yes* to this one, *no* to that one. No. I'm just *yes* and *yes* to life. If you're a 100% *yes* to life, you're a volunteer; you have become a willing life. You have become so willing that you have no will of your own. (...) *Volunteer* means, you have no will of your own; you can do whatever is needed.

My life is not about other people – it's about *me*; it's about how *I* am. It does not matter how they are; that's their choice. But how *I* am is *my* choice, it's *my* way: "no matter what they do, I'm like this". Because I am not giving that freedom to anybody: somebody can make me happy, unhappy, break me, make me angry, feel like this or like that – these privileges I keep to myself. It's time for you to do that too, because: if somebody else can decide what can happen within you right now, isn't this the ultimate slavery? What happens around us involves so many influences, but what happens within me must be my making, isn't it?

If you think that what you do is very significant, then you must learn to work with all kinds of people – and you will see: horrible people can do wonderful things, yes? But if you want to work with ideal people, you won't find any – I haven't found one yet. There are all kinds of mixed bags, but if you are willing, if you are simply one big *yes*, you'll find a way.

I'm sure that, at least when you were in school, you blew some soap bubbles: somebody got this big a bubble; somebody else got that big a bubble – because something so simple as blowing a bubble needs a certain dimension of attention. Those who have the necessary attention can blow big bubbles; those who don't

have smaller bubbles going. So, when my bubble is floating and your bubble is floating: this is *my* bubble and that is *your* bubble, clearly there. Then of course, after some time, it goes “puff”. When it goes “puff”, there is no such a thing as *my* air and *your* air. But when it was encased in the bubble: 100% *my* bubble and *your* bubble. Just like that, *this* bubble (person/life) and *that* bubble (person/life). Now, whether you blow a small bubble or a large bubble, the scale, scope and profoundness of your life simply depends on how much life you capture. You can call it *life*, or you can call it *consciousness*. The only reason you know that you’re alive is because you’re conscious. (...) Even the brain was created from within – instead of building ever more powerful computers, why are you not interested in that which creates the body and the brain? Definitely it is more intelligent than the brain, isn’t it? So if you want to put a label on that, you can call it *consciousness*; I just call it *life* – call it whatever you want. (...) When it comes to life, there is no *you* and *me*. This is a living space; we just capture a little bit of it. (...) What you refer to as consciousness is definitely the basis of all physical existence. (...) We have become so identified with forms and physicality; because of that, we are seeing life in a very small way. What is life: the 99% emptiness, or the 1% manifestation? We are still very juvenile as a species. This is why spiritual process is important. *Spiritual process* means that your experience of life has transcended the limitations of physiological and psychological process.

Yogic practices are life forms, given to you in seed form. You’re supposed to hold it that way, so that the seed can sprout and something phenomenal within you can happen.

One who is above his intellect is a *Buddha*; being a *Buddha* means that you have become a witness to your own intellect. The essence of *yoga* is just this – to arrive at that moment where there is a clear space between *you* and *your mind*. Once this happens, a life of heightened clarity, perception, and freedom has begun: this is the birth of freedom. Once you are above the intellectual process, suffering is finished in your life, because all suffering is manufactured there – in your logical mind. When you’re stuck in your intellect, you’re a non-stop suffering human being: wherever you’re put, you have a way of creating some kind of suffering. People are capable of suffering just about anything. *Suffering is the nature of the intellect*; once you have entered the intellect, this is how life is.

Once your intellect – or *buddhi* – gets identified with something, you function within the realm of identity. Then, whatever you are identified with, all your thoughts and emotions spring from that identity. The identity around which your mind functions is called *ahankara*. It is your identity that manages and determines your intellect. Once you are identified with something that you are not, the mind is an express train that cannot be stopped. If you put the mind on full steam and want to apply the brakes, it will not work. But if you are able to disentangle yourself from everything that you are not, to dis-identify yourself, you will see that the mind turns just blank and empty: when you want to use it, you can; at other times, it will simply be empty, devoid of all psychological clutter. Irrespective of what you think you are, when death confronts you, every identification falls away.

We are all equally capable internally. Every human being is capable of joy, at least for one moment; it is just that they are not capable to stay there, to maintain the atmosphere within themselves.

If you have unwavering commitment or devotion, talent can be manifested. Anything can be built if you have that steady commitment in you, that your devotion does not waver – if that one foundation is there, we can build any kind of structure upon that. But that cannot be done without the fundamental stability, so that the focus of your life does not change even for a moment. You cannot build a structure on a moving foundation; you can only build it on a stable foundation.

A human being cannot rest because he longs to be something more than he is right now. Every human being, consciously or unconsciously, is looking for a limitless possibility. (...) He is building walls of protection, but if there is no external threat, then he immediately experiences these walls of protection as walls of self-imprisonment. (...) Your life is about *mukti* (liberation); everything else is secondary, because the only thing that you are truly longing for is to expand in a limitless way – there is something within you which can't stand boundaries.

If you live with yesterday, you live with the dead. Please look at this carefully. Everything which you are, your personality, is crafted from that which is dead. From what happened yesterday, you look at everybody. So you're living with the dead. And in case something alive happens, you will jump out of your skin.

Ultimately, we have come here only to experience life, isn't it? So we know that experience is the most important aspect of life, isn't it? The human predicament is just this: the very seat of your experience is within you, but your perception is entirely outward bound. (...) The entire cosmos is just a magnified projection of a little occurrence happening within you. So, the quality of your life is always decided by how you experience life, not by what life offers you.

The basis of individual existence is actually memory, which penetrates deep into the five elements (earth, water, fire, air, space). Cleansing the elements of the compulsive tendencies that percolate into the individual as a result of mental, genetic, evolutionary, and karmic memory, helps to bring a sense of absolute harmony between the individual and the cosmos.

The sole aim of every individual's life energies is to touch the Infinite – the very core of our making. They know no other aim. Your life energies are always longing to break the boundaries set by your physical and mental structures.

Your memory and your imagination – which includes all your ideas, beliefs, and emotions – belong to the psychological realm. Life can be tasted and transcended only when there is a distinction between the psychological and the existential.

If you want any kind of transformation, any kind of forward movement in your life, it can only happen if you break the cyclical patterns of *karma*. Until you break this cycle, there is no real choice in your life. *Yoga* offers a way to distance yourself not just from your *karma*, but from the very source of *karma*, which is the discriminatory intellect.

Fundamentally, *kriya* means *internal action*. An internal action is one that does not involve either the body or the mind or the physical dimensions of energy. When you have the ability to perform action with the non-physical aspect of your energy, then it is termed a *kriya*. If your actions find outward expression, involving body, mind, and the physical dimensions of energy, that is *karma*. *Karma* is the process of binding you; *kriya* is the process of liberating you. If you take the path of *kriya*, a certain fundamental discipline has to be brought into all physical, psychological, and emotional processes. If you want to hit the peak of your consciousness, this discipline is essential.

Vak Shuddi means, cleansing the sounds that you utter. This is one way of bringing the right kind of reverberation into the system. Above all, bring the right intention into every single sound that you utter. This foundation of the right kind of reverberation is necessary if you want to use this human system as a higher possibility. But if you can become utterly still – nothing like it.

If I have a bad deal, do I have the right to commit suicide and come back again? – Personal complaints aren't good enough reasons to end the process of life. First of all, you didn't create it, so you don't talk about ending it, unless your identity as a separate being has disappeared. If you come to that point, then you can just throw away your body consciously; then, you're allowed to do it. (...) Whether it's a good deal or a bad deal, if you have a larger purpose, everything is a stepping stone for your ultimate well-being. Every situation you are getting into, you get so caught up and identified with it, to the point that now it feels that it's better to end your life. Anyway, this is a lot of bull: because today, something is going wrong, now you want to end your life; but tomorrow, something is going right, now you want to live – this is just a game that you're playing in your mind.

Human consciousness should create situations. Right now, situations are creating human consciousness.

What you accumulate can be *yours* for a certain time, but it can never ever be *you*. *Spiritual process* means, it's about *you*, not about the things you can gather and lose. Right now, your life has become about things that you gathered and not about you.

A successful human being means that, in every way, you're complete.

Once you are unwavering in your purpose, liberation cannot be denied to you; there is no way it can be denied to you. The reason why this life does not get to its natural destination is, every minute you are changing course: whatever you set your eyes on, you get identified with. So, after a while, life does not know

where to go; life looks unnecessarily complicated. But the complication is only in your psychological process.

Devotion means that you have created a certain quality of emotion within yourself that cannot be contaminated by anyone else, irrespective of what the world is doing to you or what anyone else is doing to you. If you do not have this capability, you will not go very far in this world. Otherwise, by fear, you will only take baby steps in your life. Only with assurance, you will take full strides into the world; otherwise, you will only take hesitating strides.

Consecration means that one form of energy is transformed into another. If you can turn the material into divine reverberation, that's called consecration.

This moment, how I am within myself, I would not exchange this for anything in the universe. If you would offer to give me the entire world, I would say: "no deal" – because *this* is bigger than that. Because human experience comes from within. If you take charge of it, you can create the experience you want. If you don't take charge of it, then accidentally you become high – or something else. Now, if you take charge of the basis of your experience, you will naturally cause the most pleasant experience for yourself. Have you taken charge of your life, or are you an accident? If you are an accident, anxiety is natural, isn't it? If you're anxious, you want to somehow put down life, at least in the evening and in the weekend. If what you want doesn't happen within you, how will it happen in your life? What's happening in your mind is your dream. If your dream was happening the way you want it right now, would you want to drink? But even your dream is not happening the way you want it; that's the problem – your dream machine is not taking instructions from you. So the only way is to kill it – with intoxication, you are trying to kill it, to put it to sleep.

If you casually look at a group of people, if among hundreds of people there is one face that you are familiar with, then you will see: suddenly, that face sticks out. Have you noticed this? Just this friend's face is more clear than the rest of the faces, because your eye works with memory: the more memory you have, the better it sees; no memory, it cannot see. Memory means, accumulated information; memory means, that which does not exist, but acts out as if it does. Memory is more real than reality. Everything in your life is run by memory. Even your tongue is loaded with memory; it wants the same things back. Memory means that a cocoon of the past is holding you; it will not even allow you to move into the present. There is safety within a cocoon, but walls that you build as walls of self-protection also become walls of imprisonment. The process we are looking at is: the memory imprints itself at all levels, right up to the elemental level. If we refer to *karma*, this means past action and memory. Past action only exists in the form of memory, yes?

You must walk with *absolute devotion*. What you're devoted to, it doesn't matter. Devotion means, you're devoid of yourself. Devotion means, a heightened state of receptivity, because you are no more full of yourself. There is emptiness in you, so something can touch you, something can enter you, something can reside in you. (...) Right now, you are looking at everything through a psychological mess,

and you understand your intellect as the only intelligence. But the intellect is a very rudimentary form of intelligence, useful only for utilitarian purposes. For anything else, if you want to access any other dimension, your intellect is not good enough. A deeper dimension of intelligence in you has to function. If this has to function, to be in devotion is the easiest way.

Try the following: cut out the experiential aspect of your life; think of your life 100% logically and see: you have to do the same damn things (get up – eat – work – eat – work – eat – go to bed) for the next 10, 20, 30, 40, 50 years of your life. The same nonsense every day, every day, every day. Just think logically: is it worth it? No. So, moments of extreme logic are moments of suicide. And all of you have been slowly committing suicide like this, but you don't do anything these days in one shot; you do everything in installments. (...) Stepping out of your logic sounds senseless, because right now, your idea of sense is only logical, isn't it? But please see: the most beautiful moments in your life have happened to you only when you kept your logic aside a little bit. (...) There's a logical dimension to you, and there's a dimension beyond that. If you don't explore both, you will be an incomplete human being, or you will only be half alive.

There are only two kinds of people in the world: mystics and mistakes. If your perception has made a mistake, then you're a mistake; if your perception has gone beyond the mistake, then you're a mystic. Everybody who is a mistake is a potential mystic.

Anything that is beyond survival does not open up for you unless you strive.

In this huge vast cosmos – a hundred billion galaxies – our solar system is like a speck. If our solar system evaporates, no one is gonna miss it. In this speck, planet earth is a super speck. In this super speck, right now, a country is a micro-super-speck. In that, you are a big man. That is the whole problem; (...) that is the biggest problem on the planet. (...) You are having concepts about the universe, concepts about Creation, because somewhere you think the universe spilled out of your brains. No. If you and me evaporate right now, nothing will change; a few people will cry and they will forget about us in three days. First of all, understand the context of who you are. Who the hell are you to even think about a concept of the universe? You are a micro-minute speck. Only what you perceive is real; the rest is all made up in your head.

We are seekers. Other than the spiritual purpose, there is no reason for us to be together: we look different, we eat different, we speak different languages, and so on. It is only this fundamental spiritual thread which loosely ties us together as mankind. The moment we hack it down, we will die.

Creation is just a complex amalgamation of sounds, or a reverberation.

Time is fast approaching where spiritual process will be a necessity on this planet just for survival. We are getting there very fast.

My job as a *guru* is just to give you a taste of the Ultimate. Now that you had a taste of it, you want it all. If you carefully look at your desiring process, you see that you are not willing to settle for anything limited. There is something within you which is longing for the Ultimate, always. If you seek the Ultimate unconsciously, you will always remain frustrated and the chances of finding it are remote. It's better to seek what you truly want in a conscious way. People must go *all the way* – in the name of comfort, in the name of security, they are wasting their life.

You can either exist here just as a piece of Creation, or you can exist here as the very Creator Himself.

Fear means, you're creating horror movies in your mind.

Most of the time, what is happening with you is just thought and emotion. Thought and emotion is just psychological drama; it has no existential relevance. A thousand people can sit here and live in thousand different worlds right now. That means, nobody is in reality. Nobody is living; everybody is thinking about life. Psychological space has unfortunately overtaken the existential process of life. (...) This morning, the sun came up on time. None of the planets in this solar system collided today. No accidents in the whole cosmos; everything going great. But you have one nasty little thought crawling in your head – and it's a bad day. I'm saying, you have completely lost perspective with life: you've lost perspective as to who you are; it's a kind of madness. Once you lose perspective as to who you truly are, you are a sickness by nature. The process is on – one day it will manifest; you're working hard towards it.

Largely, there is no education in the world. There are ancillary units supplying cogs to the main machine. Human beings are like fuel for a larger machine, or economic engine, that we have created. See, the immediate needs of a society have to be attended to; somehow we have to do it – but to what extent? The fundamental goal of education is to enhance human perception; this is the only goal. For what is truly relevant for this piece of life, the education is nowhere near that. The education is telling you: "your life is not important; you have to serve the society". Every life on this planet, its only longing is to find its full potential. Now, we're trying to make life serve something else – an economic machine, a war machine. Today, we are enslaving life to serve social structures. No! Social structures must be made in such a way that they will serve life.

If your identification with the physical is not strong, your life will not be cyclical.

It is important that the child has come into contact with spiritual process before his intelligence gets hijacked by puberty, that he is conscious that "there is something more to me than my body". This must become an established reality in his mind and his experience. Then he will handle the physical in a more graceful way. Otherwise, the physical turns a lot of people into brutish existence. Whether it finds expression or not, within themselves, a lot of people have a very brutish existence. (...) Because we don't take care of what happens within an individual human being, we're trying to police the society. In some way, you're

turning the whole world into a prison. If we are truly civilized, we must be able to live here well without a police force. (...) Without creating better human beings, we will not create a better society – not possible; there is no such a thing.

You are one year closer to death. It's time to look inward, because if you don't do this one thing, you will die miserably for sure. If you miss this important fact, you are living an extremely stupid life. If you have not found anything beyond the physical, if the moment of death comes, terror is the only way – you have no other choice, isn't it?

When I'm bound and you're free, when other people don't have their hooks on you, I can't tolerate this. When I'm bound, you should also be bound, because I'm bound to you – why are you not bound to me? So this is the whole game.

Both in terms of intelligence and memory, every cell in your body carries much more than your brain carries. One molecule carries information that your brain cannot decipher, that much information it carries. What happened in the last few million years it remembers, and it's still manifesting, isn't it? The whole creation is just intelligence.

Even today, people experience a moment of love as the most profound experience of their life. It is not; but they experience it that way because that is the most intense thing they have touched – the deepest dimension of life they have touched is a moment of love. (...) When human beings fail, you get yourself a dog: a guaranteed 12 year love affair. Do not underestimate this. Your dog, every day, what an excited welcome he gives you. Nobody is capable of this, isn't it? Dog is love, for sure. (...) So people are raising love to heaven; they are transporting it to heaven.

In *yoga*, we don't look at anything as love, hate, happiness, misery; we don't look at it that way. We just look at it this way: do you want to be pleasant or unpleasant? If you become pleasant in your body, we call it *health*. If you become very pleasant, we call it *pleasure*. If your mind becomes pleasant, we call it *peace*. If it becomes very pleasant, we call it *joy*. If your emotions become pleasant, we call it *love*; if they become very pleasant, we call it *compassion*. If your very life energies become pleasant, we call this *bliss*; if they become very pleasant, we call it *ecstasy*. If your surroundings become pleasant, we call it *success*. The other names that you give are just leading to confusion. (...) If you are pleasant within yourself, then you will do everything only to the extent that it is necessary; you will not overdo anything. Otherwise, people go blind with what they love or hate; they lose all their sense. (...) If you are not pleasant within you, then other people have to be fixed the way you want them in order for you to feel pleasant – and that's not possible. Nobody can be fixed the way you want them; you're not able to do that even with one person, isn't it? The more you try this, the more bitterness and unhappiness will happen. (...) If people around you are unpleasant, it becomes even more important that you are pleasant.

Do people grow up and blossom, or are they brought up by somebody? The general expression is: "I was brought up in this place", "I was brought up in that way", etc. – I think it is absolutely ridiculous and humiliating that a human being has to be brought up. You bring up cattle, okay? You don't bring up a human being. A human being is supposed to blossom by his own nature. That's why he is on the top of the pile, at least on this planet, on the evolutionary scale. And most human beings don't seem to understand that. Or they are not allowed to understand that by a whole lot of people. Bringing up means, somebody's molding you; molding means, it's a predetermined shape – a mold means, it's always gonna be the same; we want to have the same form again and again and again. Right now, that seems to be the work of the education system, the religions and the family. They want you to be in a certain mold; they don't want you to blossom like a wildflower. They're afraid of anything fresh happening among them – they want something familiar; they don't want anything unfamiliar. If you allow your humanity to blossom, then you will see, you don't belong to any mold. This is the beauty of being human: there is no particular way to be; what is human is not defined, not prescribed. For every other creature, nature drew two lines; within that, they will have to play their game. For the human being, only the bottom line is drawn – there is no top line. But socially, people are trying to draw a top line for themselves. But nature has not drawn a top line for you; it's a limitless possibility.

In the last 15 years, the world's ability to communicate across countries and borders has so much intensified, it's so unprecedented, nobody has ever been used to these kinds of influences before. No other generation before our young people has ever experienced this kind of onslaught from so many directions, and the volume of influences is too big. Nobody knows where this is going, because it's too complex and it's too mixed. (...) Today's young people get easily bored, because they have seen the whole cosmos on their smartphone screen. By the time they are 18, they have seen everything you need to see with body, mind and emotion. By the time they are 25 – what next? You will see, it is not my wish, but if this level of information continues and multiplies manifold for the coming generations, you should not be surprised, in the next 50 to 100 years, if 50% of the human population choose to commit suicide. Because that is what will happen to the mind. Today (2014), this day, more people commit suicide in this world than all the wars and murders and accidents managed to kill. If this level of information onslaught continues on the human mind at the same pace or at a higher pace, which is possible in the next few years, this will definitely lead to wanting to terminate yourself, because there will be nothing to live for; there is no joy and excitement about anything. You just look at the bored look in the eyes of children, 12 or 15 years old – it's almost a common feature. Communication onslaught will lead to a certain overload on the mind, and suddenly a human being will think: "Why am I here?". (...) Your thoughts and emotions are your cinema; if you are not able to end it somewhere, it's going endlessly on in your mind and you're going crazy. (...) Now, the thrills of life have become larger than life itself: life is entirely missed. If you touch life within you, then it's an explosion of energy. And it's only if you're touched by something that now, suddenly, it's worth living – if you're not touched by anything, then your life is a nonsensical routine; it's not worth living. If something doesn't sparkle within you, definitely

there is a question whether I should live or not, isn't it? And we're taking humanity in this direction with an overload of information which is just garbage collection.

If you're smart with life, you must be blissful. Otherwise, you're only smart at a tea party.

If you are conscious that you are mortal every moment of your life, spiritual process has begun for you. It is your mortality which makes you want to know what is the nature of your existence. You really want to know where you came from and where you will go, only when it sinks in: "all this drama, one day, it will end". Right now, you think only others appear in obituary columns, and you are simply going to read it. If you want to know the value of life, just know that it is a brief happening. If you're truly joyful and ecstatic, it's horribly brief, believe me. But if you're depressed or miserable, one day seems like an endless thing – only miserable people have a long life. For what possibilities a human being carries, for the immensity of what a human being is, it's too brief a life. Even if you live a 100 years, 200 years, it's still too brief, because before you know what's happening, before you explore a few dimensions of life, it will be over.

There aren't so many *gurus*. There are scholars, there are teachers, there are charlatans, there are godmen – but there are not so many *gurus* out there; there are very few. And there are many, many realized beings, different levels of realization, different levels of perception and experience. It's just that they don't carry a banner around themselves that they are realized. They are not that gross. And they will not fit into your idea of what a realized being is, because your ideas have nothing to do with realization. Every time a *guru* comes, he naturally faces persecution at some point of his life, simply because he does not fit into your idea of what a realized being should be, because your ideas have been formed by the ones who came before. (...) You don't know whether I'm a realized being; there is no way for you to know. So you should not even believe that I'm realized or not; you just have to see whether being with me is useful for your growth or not. If it is, hang around.

The people who are around me, their devotion is not towards me as a person, but towards me as a possibility in their life.

Devotion is a deeper love affair of just absolutely giving; whether taking is there or not, it doesn't matter, it doesn't occur in your mind. For me, my love affair is just with everything I set my eyes upon – man, woman, child, animate, inanimate... it does not matter. Whatever I set my eyes upon, I'm in a deep embrace with that. Tears of devotion are not even about love. If you would tell me that I'm in love with people, I wouldn't feel that this is a great thing. I'm not in love, because love is still a kind of a transaction. This is a certain dimension of inclusiveness. Actually in my experience, there is nobody else on this planet, in this existence – it's just me. I don't see myself and somebody else; I just see myself. This is the way existence is. If you do not constipate your consciousness by being identified with limited things such as your own family, nation, species, then the existence is all-inclusive. (...) Somewhere you have stopped yourself

because of a limited identity. So now, the whole system of spiritual process is to take that off, so that you experience the whole existence as yourself.

There is no such a thing as love energy; there is only life energy. Love is just a human emotion; love is the sweetness of your emotion – it has nothing to do with the universe. Love is just one expression of life; intellect another expression of life; physical action is another expression of life; awareness is another expression of life. So life can find a million forms of expression, but people energizing one over the other is a huge mistake: all of them are needed. Love, without the needed awareness and balance, will be horribly burdensome. (...) All I am doing is exuding life energy that is most intense.

Neurologically, we know that there are a lot of nerve endings in your palm. Actually, your hands are speaking more than your tongue and your voice. So there's a whole science of *mudras* in *yoga*: just by holding your hands in different ways, you can make the whole system function in different ways. The hand can do wonderful things to the system. So, folding your hands is a certain *mudra*: the moment you place your hands together like this, your dualities, your likes and dislikes, your cravings and aversions, all these things are levelled out; there is a certain oneness to the expression of who you are. When you do this, your energies function as one.

[About folding your hands as a greeting:] If I look at your body, I may like you or I may dislike you. If I look at your mind, again, I may like you or dislike you. If I look at your emotional structure, I may like you or dislike you. – So, when I meet a person, I do not want to get entangled with these likes and dislikes; I do not want to get entangled with that being. So, first thing when you meet a person, you identify his ultimate nature. There is a source of creation within him; that's why he was created. So the very Source of Creation within him, first you bow down to that. You're trying to establish a relationship with that, because that's your aspiration with yourself also. You're cultivating the direction towards that. First thing is, you refer to the Source of Creation within the person. Then, maybe, we can move to a different level: maybe you like the intellect of a person, the emotion of a person, the physicality of a person – we then engage in these directions.

The only intention of meeting a human being is: either you can enhance his life, or he can enhance your life, or both of you are enhancing each other's life. – Otherwise, people should not meet; it's better they are alone. You're not in a compulsive need of company. If you're feeling lonely when you are alone, it means that you are in bad company. If you don't enjoy the company of *this* person, obviously you are in bad company.

There is no such a thing as man-woman love, man-mother love, man-son love, man-daughter love – there is no such a thing. Love is just a certain sweetness of emotion. How you're arriving at it, the method, is the only question. As you sit here, you can feel love about somebody who's not even here – so it has nothing to do with anybody; it is just the sweetness of your emotions.

We have different kinds of relationships in our lives. We form relationships to fulfill certain of our needs, or somebody else's needs, whichever way. But what you refer to as love is just the sweetness of your emotion: you can use another person to stimulate that within you, or you can be on self-start mechanism.

The love affair between a man and a woman is chemically supported by nature. Nature constantly wants you to reproduce, because it wants to reproduce itself. It is neither a good thing, nor a bad thing. For most of these love affairs, unfortunately, once the chemistry runs out, they wonder what the hell they are doing. So before the chemistry runs out, you're supposed to establish a different level of conscious love affair which is beyond the chemistry. If that doesn't happen, it turns ugly. When your intelligence gets hijacked by the hormones, very few individuals have the necessary awareness to look beyond that at life – everybody else gets flooded by this process. By the time they recover, usually, it's too late.

Is mutual-benefit-scheme-love wrong or right? There is nothing wrong or right; it's just limited, that's all. Is being limited a crime? No, but the nature of the human being is such: he suffers misery; he doesn't like it.

Once a human being becomes more and more aware of his own nature, he understands: to experience love, to experience blissfulness, to experience ecstasy, even to experience orgasmic ways of life, you don't need anybody, actually. If you just sit here, you can make it happen within yourself. Because after all, it's *your* body, it's *your* emotion, it's *your* mind, it's *your* chemistry – and *you* are the one who is creating all the experiences of your life. But people are not conscious of this, that *you* are the maker of your life, that *you* are the one who is doing your life the way you want it. Most people still believe that their experiences are being shaped by people and situations around them – but that's not true: human experiences are 100% self-created.

In the name of freedom, in the name of choice, life is getting horribly compulsive. If it's all about yourself, you will not know the beauty of life. Traditional marriages were only about the other person; and if both people think like that, then it's a beautiful place to be. But if only one person thinks like that, then it becomes exploitation. If both people don't think like that, then it's just a compulsive relationship: me trying to extract something from you; you trying to extract something from me – it's a conflict situation all the time.

This very body that you carry was created from within, isn't it? You provided the raw material from outside, but the creation process happened from within. So obviously, the source of creation is within, or the manufacturer of the body is within. So if you have a repair job to do, would you like to go to the manufacturer or to the local mechanic? If you have access to the manufacturer, that's the place where you would like to go. Because a manufacturer knows much more about this machine than a local tinkerer, isn't it? But if you've lost access to the manufacturer, then you have to deal with the local tinkerer. So, to generate health, trying to fix it from the outside is not the right process. If you keep the access to the innermost core, then health will be a natural phenomenon, not

something that you have to manage from the outside – that's the very wrong perception. (...) Chronic illness means that the body is creating disease against itself.

Stress is not a part of your life; stress is just your inability to manage your own system – your body, your mind, your emotions, your energy, your chemistry. You do not know how to manage anything; you're functioning by accident, so everything is stressful. You get into your car without a steering wheel, just blundering through life. Stress is not because of the nature of the activity which you are performing, not because of life situations. Stress is simply because you do not know how to manage your own system. What is stressful for you, somebody else is breezing through it, isn't it so? It's about managing the inner situation, not the outer situation. It's about the *context of your life*, not the *content of your life*. Changing the context of your life is something you can do consciously, voluntarily; it's not at all situational. However, changing the content of your life may not be possible at your will, because you need permission from the situations within which you exist, isn't it? Three persons could be doing the same thing, but the experience of what they are doing might be worlds apart, depending on the context which they choose for themselves (f.i. depending on the context of one's life, the same activity will, in terms of meaning, be experienced as either "simply cutting stones", or "doing something to fill my belly", or "building a beautiful temple"). How simple or complex an activity you are doing will not change the quality of your life – in what *context* are you doing it? This is the question.

Fear of death means, we took a loan from planet earth and we don't want to pay it back. You took a loan, and after some time, you thought, "I am the loan". It's like taking a pebble in my hand and then thinking, "this is me". If it's taken away, I will be terrorized. Nothing is taken away; the planet is only asking back the piece of food which you accumulated. The question of paying back the loan is only: willingly or unwillingly? If you're a *yogi*, you will pay it back gracefully; if you're an ignorant person, your "property" will be confiscated.

The physical body is only gathering around the subtle body, or etheric body. So when this body falls, the subtle body is still on; it still has some information. But the important difference is: when you had a physical body and a conscious mind, you had a discriminatory capability. So once the body falls down with the thinking mind, the discriminatory aspect of the mind has fallen: there is no more discrimination; you only happen by tendency. If a person dies in a certain mode, once he loses the discriminatory mind, there is no more control over that mode. If there is no discriminatory mind, then the mind just snowballs: if it snowballs into pleasantness, we say he's in heaven; if it snowballs into unpleasantness, we say he's in hell. When we talk spirituality, we're essentially talking about moving from compulsiveness to consciousness, from functioning through tendencies to functioning through discriminatory process. That is the key from bondage to freedom.

The basis of competition is to put one thing above the other, one person above the other. Once you put one thing above the other – making one thing small, one thing big; one thing high, one thing low; one thing divine, another thing filthy – then you missed the whole point of existence. Everybody is a king by himself.

In order to function in society, you need an identity. But if you believe in that, then you are in a mess. It limits you in a huge way. Your mind always works around your identity: what you're identified with always seems to be right; what you're not identified with does not seem to be right. Having an identity for practical purposes of operation in the world is one thing, but having an identity to make yourself within yourself is a different thing. You're trying to build your essential nature with your identity; that's a big mess. That means, you will not be a human being; you will just be a concept, a bundle of thoughts, opinions, prejudices which go with that identity. All identified identity is exclusive towards everything else; it hugely cripples you, because your mind will only work around that. The deeper your experience of life, the better you would be at anything in life, for sure. And you can deepen your experience only if you're wide open to everything, isn't it?

Life has become a struggle because we have no clarity, no perception as to the nature of our existence.

Enlightenment is not an achievement; it's just a realization. When we say realization, we mean that you only perceive that which is already there. Why would you have to work hard in order to be yourself?

When we say, "it's *your karma*", what we mean is that the experience of your life is 100% your doing. The basis of your experience is all inside of you, within you. But you have no way to access it; your perception is all outward bound. In order to look inward, the necessary basis has not been created in the society today. We haven't invested in that direction; for that, there isn't a structure. We have hospitals, we have schools, but no society has invested enough towards the inner well-being of a human being.

That which stops light is, in a way, anti-light, isn't it? Your very existence is relevant only because you're bouncing off something. If there's nothing to bounce off, you're like light – it's irrelevant if nothing stops it; only when something stops it, it becomes relevant.

Every action has a consequence. If you can joyfully accept the consequence, do what you want. If you do something, and the consequence of that comes, and you cry – then, if that is your state, be conscious about what you do. By taking responsibility, you break the karmic process. Your ability to respond is limitless.

It's only Truth that will carry you across, not somebody's talk.

This moment is inevitable, is it true? Your ability to respond is limitless, is it true? Just stick to it.

Some people cut the mango with the same knife with which they have cut the onion. Now you can't keep it in your mouth; the sweetness of the mango is gone. If the residual impact of whatever the knife has touched stays there in it, slowly the knife will lose its purpose, isn't it? The same goes for your intellect. If the memory sticks to your intellect, after some time, it will become a useless intellect. People ask me all the time, Sadhguru, how are you doing all the things you do? I have 12-14 tracks running all the time – I just initiate and leave; they will run by themselves.

A lot of people have not striven for their success; they are successful *by chance*. That's why they are euphoric and depressed. If they had crafted their success, they would know the mechanics of success. It doesn't matter what's happening today, you know where you're going anyway – nobody can take it away from you. So people who do not know the mechanics of what they are doing, the fundamentals of what they are doing, if by chance, because of situational help, somebody becomes successful, he is euphoric. But actually, they are hitting a lottery; they are not successful.

If you are tensed up because of what is happening in life or in the world, you can say: "This is all God's will." You can sleep well; it is a good tranquilizer. When Marx said, "religion is the opium of the masses", people took it as something negative – but it is not a negative thing. A lot of people are able to sleep only because they believe in God; otherwise, they wouldn't be able to sleep. This is a very inexpensive psychiatry. If you go to the modern psychiatrist, he can only take one client at a time, and he needs furniture. Without this inexpensive religious psychiatry, most minds would break. It takes an extremely clear mind to exist here without the help of an outer agency; all others need it. So I don't wish to destroy that support for anybody, but you must decide: are you looking for solace in your life, or are you looking for a solution in your life? If you are looking for solace, just believing something always helps. If you are looking for a solution, there is another way to approach.

These are two different aspects: *experience* will transform your life; *understanding* comes in only if you want to transform others' lives.

[About experiencing life:] How badly do you want it, that's the question. Because what you're asking is: *I want to transcend the present dimension of my existence*. No transcendence will happen, nobody will cross any dimensional limitations, unless you're truly, truly longing for it. You won't even pass a school examination if there isn't a reasonable amount of longing, isn't it? Yes or no? (...) See, this is the problem with me – I'm not simply saying: "Don't worry, you just say 'ram ram' twenty-five times a day, and it will happen." This is the problem with me. Because I am not here to solace you and let you sleep tonight; I'm here to awaken you in such a way that you can't sleep. (...) Otherwise, there is not enough longing, not enough fire in the belly, so you don't move. This is so with everything in life.

We see the body as five dimensions or five *koshas* (sheathes). Physical body is known as *Annamaya kosha*: *anna* means *food*; this is the *food body*. Next one is called *Manomaya kosha*; that means, the *mental body*. The third one is called *Pranamaya kosha*, which means, the *energy body*. Physical body, mental body, energy body – all these three dimensions are physical; they are physical existence. Physical body is very gross; mental body is subtler; pranic body is even subtler – but all these three are physical dimensions of life. This physical dimension of life, in all these three dimensions, carries the imprints of *karma*: on the *body* it is imprinted; on the *mind* it's imprinted; and on the *energy* it's imprinted. These karmic imprints, or the karmic structure, is what holds it together. *Karma* is the cement which holds you to the physical body. *Karma* is the bondage; at the same time, it's only because of karmic stuff that you can hold on to the body and be here. Now, the next two dimensions are called *Vignanamaya kosha* and *Anandamaya kosha*. *Vignanamaya kosha* is non-physical, but related to the physical; it is like a transient state. *Anandamaya kosha* is completely non-physical. So, *Vignanamaya kosha* and *Anandamaya kosha* means, it's the *bliss body*: it is non-physical; it has no form of its own. Only if the energy body, the mental body and the physical body are in shape, then this karmic structure can hold the bliss body in shape. If these things are taken away, the bliss body will just become a part of the cosmos. So whatever you are referring to as *atman* or the soul is a fiction, actually; in a sense, people are describing a certain limitation of the non-physical as a soul, but the body for the soul is still your *karma*. If the karmic structure is completely dismantled, then there is no soul: everything merges into everything else. What is referred to as *Mahasamadhi* or *Mahaparinirvana* is just this: that you slowly understand where the keys are and dismantle the karmic structure, so that you become truly no more. When somebody dies, we say this person is no more – that's not true. That person is no more the way you know them, but they still very much exist. Now if you dismantle the karmic structure hundred percent, now you merge with the existence. This is what is referred to as *Mukti* in Hindu tradition; in yogic tradition, it is referred to as *Mahasamadhi*; in the Buddhist way, it is called *Mahaparinirvana*; generally in English, we are saying *liberation*. Liberation means, becoming free from the very process of life and birth and death; liberation means, becoming free from the basic structures of body and mind and life energies – and for all this, the karmic structure is the strings which hold these things together. So when a person dies, obviously the physical body is something that you borrowed from the earth. This body is just earth, isn't it? You have to pay it back, atom to atom, no interest though – but you have to pay back every atom. You won't be allowed to carry a single atom from this planet. Physical body will fall apart. The mental body and the pranic body, depending on the strength of your *karma*, goes on. If the karmic structure is very intense, unfinished, then it has to finish it, it has to hang. So this is what you are referring to as ghosts. This is why they told in the tradition, if somebody dies unnaturally, either by accident or suicide or some other way, they will become ghosts. It is not so; everybody becomes. But because they have more intense karmic structures, you people might experience them a little more than other beings who die of old age. If one completes his allotted *karma* for that life, he will die just like that – without disease, without accident, without an injury. When one dies simply like that, then that person may find another body within hours. If the *karma* has

become weak because it has run its course, then it very easily finds another body. This is why, in this tradition, they always said, if one completes his life and dies peacefully, it's the best way to die, because he did not hang around, immediately it goes on. Now when you walk the spiritual path, the ultimate goal for every seeker is, he wants to break this whole process. What you call a soul is fictitious, because there is no such a thing as your soul and my soul and somebody else's soul. Right now, this unboundedness is contained in the limited karmic structure, so it makes you believe as if this is a separate entity. If you take away the keys which hold the karmic structure, then it just collapses.

If you want to detach yourself from life, you must do it efficiently – two meters of rope can do it. I am asking you: are you here to experience life or to avoid life? – Tell me, can you experience anything in life, from the simplest to the most complex, anything, if you are not involved in the process? Where there is no involvement, there is no experience. The more profound your involvement, the more profound your experience of life. So why do you want to detach? Detachment will never happen. Those who will try to detach will get more and more entangled, because such is the nature of experience. You have a mind saying: if you don't want something, then *only that* will happen. Your problem is entanglement; this happens because your involvement is selective or discriminatory. Can you look at everything with the same level of involvement, the highest level of involvement you can manage? With absolute, indiscriminatory involvement, there is no entanglement.

According to you: what *you* want in your life is always a necessity; what *somebody else* wants is always greed.

Misery is not caused by any situation. Situations are there: some of them we can handle; some of them we cannot handle – that's all life is. (...) You're causing misery because your basic faculties, your mind, emotions and body, are not under your control – that's why you're causing misery. See for yourself: Everything is right for you, but still, how many moments in twenty-four hours are you truly joyful? Very few, isn't it? That's an unfortunate way to live.

What is bad and good is just what you like and dislike, isn't it? (...) Somewhere, we made investments in our deceptions so deep that there is no way out. (...) The first and foremost thing you owe to yourself is: you must at least be straight with yourself, a 100%. Maybe you can't afford to be straight with anyone in the world, but at least with yourself, you must be straight a 100%; you owe it to yourself. (...) Believing or disbelieving things which are not a reality in your life means: somewhere, you are lying to yourself. (...) See, whatever you believe is your belief; it has nothing to do with reality – it is your nonsense. But reality is: you really don't know. If you become a big "I do not know", then the longing to know will burn within you. When the longing comes, seeking will happen. And when the seeking will happen, knowing will come: your nature is such that you cannot live with "I do not know" forever – you have to find it. What is within you cannot be denied to you by anybody else except yourself. Otherwise, your whole life will be wasted in hallucination, in imaginations. If you are really sincere about making a journey, first thing to see is: what I know, I know; what I do not know, I

do not know. This is the only way you will go somewhere; otherwise, you will just be hallucinating.

If happy people meet, then there can be something wonderful happening between them. But if you're a misery and you think somebody else should be the source of your happiness – well, it will multiply.

You are not suffering life; you are suffering your memory and your imagination. Imagination is just a reflection of the memory, and these two things do not need intelligence – intelligence is of a different nature.

Unless you are absolutely devoted to what you are doing, you will never make anything significant. Without devotion, you will not go through the pain. Whatever the area, nobody has ever gotten to any significant space without being devoted to it. In every area of life, if there is no devotion, you will do only mediocre things; you will not do something significant. Excellence will not even be approached, because mediocre things will happen if there is no devotion in what we are doing. Devotion means a single-minded focus. Devotion means, we are willing to do the same thing without any damn reward in our life: we are not doing a transaction; we are doing something because we see that it is *significant*. (...) Right now, we have become goal-oriented. No! – being devoted to the *process* is the most important thing. In *yoga*, we say: *If you have one eye on the goal, you have only one eye to find your way*. This is inefficient. If you use *everything you have* to find your way, only then you will get somewhere. (...) Winning and losing is not your business; playing is your business. We must train for involvement with life. We must understand this, for any aspect of life: where there is no involvement, there is no life.

Without involvement, there is no life. How profound is your involvement? – This will determine how profound is your experience of life. (...) The important thing is to be absolutely devoted to the *process*, whatever you are doing right now. How far will it get us? It will get us as far as it gets – the times will decide. The question is only this: everything that you have, does it find expression or not? That's all it is. Otherwise, you yourself are a big problem. For most human beings, they do not need any enemies: they are just doing great by themselves; they are great enemies to themselves. (...) See, every human being has a certain genius in life. The only thing is: unless they find the right atmosphere and the right level of involvement, that genius will not flower. And the sad story on this planet is: 99% of the population never opens up their genius. They will live mediocre lives simply because they are interested in the goal, in what they will get in the end; they are not interested in what's happening now.

Without adrenaline, what is the main purpose of going fast? – The whole purpose of going fast is just this: there is something in a human being, ultimately in this world, in human society, among the monkeys, among the lizards, among everybody, in their world, whatever they are – ultimately, the only thing that is valued is competence. So, if you get adrenaline, you will not go very far – because your competence will go away.

I don't enjoy anything in particular; I just make sure all of the time I'm joyful, and I do whatever the hell I can.

Freedom is not something that you do; freedom is not an act – freedom is a consequence of how I experience my life. Freedom comes out of a responsible existence. If you think of the consequence without taking care of the process, you will always end up as a disaster.

Right now, people are trying to milk happiness from the world, destroying the world in the process, in pursuit of human happiness, isn't it? – nothing else. In pursuit of human happiness, we turn this planet into a bonfire – and people are not even happy. Forget about being happy; most people are in different states of struggles. So it is very, very important – what is in your hands, first of all, those things must be taken charge of. Then, what we do in the world, let us see to what extent the world allows us to do it. Your body, your mind, your emotions and your energies must take instructions from you.

A casual question has no intensity; it cannot penetrate. So right now, I can tell you something – but it's not in your experience. If I tell you something which is not in your experience, what can you do? You can believe it, or you can disbelieve it. If you believe it, you're not any closer to it; if you disbelieve it, you're not any closer to it. You can tell some fanciful story about it, but you have not moved an inch, isn't it?

See, people think they can enjoy something. No – if you are joyful, then everything is a pleasant experience.

When the promised heaven in people's heads does collapse in their minds, what is going to happen? People are going to seek it here. If they don't find it, they will hang on to anything, such as drugs and alcohol. Intoxication means that you lose your faculties for the sake of gaining a very transitory pleasure. You're taking a backwards step with life, because life can only be enhanced by sharpening and increasing our faculties. Every human being wants his faculties enhanced, and if you don't show them proper ways, they will seek shortcuts. The man who goes to the temple and the man who goes to the bar – they are both seeking the same thing; they are trying to enhance their life: one by religion, the other by alcohol.

If everything you are going to do would have to come from your experience, this would mean that you are going to be very small. How many things, out of all possible things, can you experience? Not many: even the widest ranging experience is still very small. No, your memory and your intelligence are two different things.

I'm looking at every nation just as a segment of humanity, not as political or geographical borders. Right now, the nation is the largest segment which you can address.

Yoga means *union*. Union means that, right here and right now, you are happening as a part of everything else. What you think of as *myself* is just a psychological boundary which you have set up. *Yoga* means, consciously obliterating the boundaries of your individuality. So, if you sit here and you experience everything as myself, this is *yoga*. For anything which you experience as a part of yourself, you do not need any values or morals to relate to. When someone experiences the whole universe as a part of himself, then we say that he is a *yogi*.

From a physical point of view, *yoga* is a way of aligning your physical geometry to the cosmic geometry.

All human experience comes from within, isn't it? You can't milk happiness from something else or somebody else. All human experience is generated from within, and what comes from within you must be the way you want it.

If your life is worthwhile, isn't it important that you invest a certain amount of time and energy, instead of looking for some quick fix?

According to Charles Darwin, the human being evolved out of a monkey. Some of the genetic scientists today are saying that the DNA difference between a chimpanzee and a human being is only 1,23%. So in that sense, physiologically, a human being is only 1,23% away from a chimpanzee. Not a big difference, isn't it? Just a shade of difference. But in terms of intelligence and awareness, a human being is worlds apart from a chimpanzee. So your problem is just this: you have an intelligence for which you do not have a stable enough platform – and that's why *yoga*: to create a stable platform, so that your intelligence works for you. Right now, you may call it so many things: stress, tension, anxiety, depression, madness, all kinds of things. All this, essentially, what it means is, your intelligence has turned against you. That's all. If your intelligence was working for you, would you create blissfulness or misery? If your intelligence turns against you, no power in the universe is going to save you – you're done.

Death means that you have lost all ability to respond; *life* means your ability to respond. Now, make up your mind about how alive you want to be. 80% of the population are experts in self-torture.

You're suffering your own intelligence. If I give you a sharp knife, and you hold it on the wrong end, it hurts, doesn't it? You're suffering your own capabilities.

A *guru* is there not to give you a commandment, but only to assist you to seek. The moment he gives you commandments, he's claiming to be God. You seek a *guru* because you want your seeking to be more effective, not because you are seeking an answer.

What does *consecrated places* mean? *Consecrated places* means, very concentrated life energy. The same energy, if it is very dynamic, we call it life; if it attains a certain level of inertia, then we say it's death – the same stuff; life and death is the same stuff. So, the whole purpose of various practices that we do is:

how dynamic can you get your energy, so that your seeking becomes effective? If it is not dynamic, your seeking will not be effective. Every time you make a conclusion, every time you believe something, you bring inertia into your life and intelligence. So, a *guru* is not there to give you commandments – a *guru* is there to constantly crank you up and crank you up and crank you up, so that you are dynamic in every aspect of your life. Without dynamism, you will not taste life. If inertia gathers, because of drug or drink, then you are creating death. Most people are alive, but they are practicing death: it looks like they are going to their own funeral; there is no joy in anything they do.

We use the word “raise” only for cattle. Human beings, you don’t raise them; they don’t belong to you – you must understand this.

People are not suffering life; they are suffering their memory and their imagination.

Your intellect is ruled by your memory: what kind of memories you have, that it brings out. Just because you are not conscious of most memories, it looks like phantastic things are coming out of your intellect – but nothing phantastic is coming out; what you have gathered is coming out, but in many different formats. I’m not saying that it is useless; I’m only saying that it is a limited possibility.

I am who I am because I never identified myself with anything or anybody. I was involved with everything, but never really identified with anything.

The moment you seek security in your life, you will seek familiar terrain, and you will become compulsive – there is no other way.

If you are trying to beat compulsiveness with force, you will switch from one cycle to another cycle to another cycle – it just keeps happening. Fundamentally, what is happening is this: you are so strongly identified with your physical nature that you will inevitably be cyclical, do whatever you want. *Spiritual process* means that your experience of life becomes larger than your physicality, which includes your thought and emotion.

When within you, the life that you captured is a larger dimension than the body that you carry, the thoughts and the emotions, then no belief is needed – you are simply conscious of that, that’s all; it’s a reality for you. Naturally, what is most dominant becomes you, isn’t it?

Everything begins in mysticism and ends in politics.

If you don’t identify yourself with anything around you – parents, teachers, society, religion, politics, economics, genetics, psychological drama – then it is natural for human intelligence to find its way; nobody needs to teach anybody anything. But you don’t want that; you want your children identified with you – because to you, they are your legacy; to you, they are not a new life. You want to live after death; you want your children to be just like you in so many ways... The

only qualification which you have over your children is that you just happened to come a little earlier, nothing else – so you know a few survival tricks that they do not know. But a child, as a life, is far more exuberant than you are.

When people have children, they only have a few moments of joy. The rest is all anxiety about survival: “What will happen? What will happen? What will happen?” – It’s all survival process.

Civilization is organization. But organization can also become suffocating for the good of an individual life.

If you are not identified with anything, it is natural for human intelligence to seek relentlessly, without any purpose.

Mysticism has no utility. It is like pure science; you just want to know. Your life becomes profound, but it has no applications as such.

It is your goodness which is the problem, because your goodness is very contextual and of a limited identity.

As you think of it, you cannot exist here all by yourself; you’re just existing as a small part of everything else. So your existence here is related to everything in the universe, but your psychological structure is not related to anything. Our intellect only works around our identity; the intellect cannot work without a memory bank with which we identify.

What I gather, I may say, is mine: “this cup is mine”. But if I say, “this cup is me”, then you will know that I am a psychological case. So, right now, the food on your plate is your food; but the moment you eat it, the food becomes you. We have lost the distinction between what is *me* and what is *mine*; we got mixed up. So there is no subjectivity in human beings. People think their thoughts and emotions are subjectivity. No, the material for your thought and emotion has been gathered from outside, isn’t it so? Hello? It’s objective; it’s very much an object. So subjectivity will come only when intelligence which is beyond memory becomes a living experience for you. There is a dimension of intelligence within you which is unsullied by memory. With this intelligence, if you access it, life becomes a play.

We must understand: memory is a structure which is useful for our survival. But memory is also a boundary. The only boundaries you have are the boundaries of your memory. Whatever you strongly identify with, that you become.

Nobody has ever passed on any wisdom; we can only pass on survival skills which we have learned. And all the skills which we have acquired in the past are not going to be such great a thing anymore in the future, like writing eventually: the machine will do it for us. The skills that we are transferring are only relevant in the times that they exist. Nobody can pass on intelligence; nobody can pass on wisdom.

If your intellect is kept in your memory, then it will gather memory in such a way that after a while, it is a useless thing. For instance, your mirror at home: suppose your mirror remembers 10% of what it saw in all those years – this mirror is finished. This is what consciousness means: it shows you life just the way you are; there is no mess up between psychological content and the ability to see life the way it is. If you have a mirror that remembers, it doesn't see anything the way it is, isn't it? So, consciousness means just this: you make your intelligence unencumbered by the memory that you have.

The English word *mind* doesn't say anything, because it's just one generic word which does not describe different dimensions of what the mind is. What you are calling *mind* right now is a certain combination of memory and intelligence. There is memory in your body, more memory than you can imagine. You don't remember a thing consciously, but your body remembers one hundred percent. How, one generation ago, your grandmother was, your body still remembers. How, a million years ago, your forefathers were, your body still remembers, isn't it? It has not forgotten, and it is not going to forget. Your mind is not capable of this kind of memory. Your body has a trillion times more memory than your so-called brain. This whole shift towards the brain and intellectual process is a European malaise; they gave too much significance to thought. This has happened because they lived under a subjugated society, religiously subjugated society, where you are not supposed to think anything except what's written in some book – otherwise, you're dead. They lived like this for a long time. Because of this, when they got a little freedom to think and managed to live, they started celebrating their thought too much. Let's understand the context of thought: you can only think from the data that you already have gathered; that means, you can never think anything new. You can recycle it; you can rehash it; you can produce permutations and combinations of it – but you cannot think something absolutely new. It is not in the nature of thought to come up with something new; it can only recycle the past. That means, if you dedicate yourself to your thought process, if you enshrine your thought process, you are ensuring that nothing new ever happens in your life. What you think is your psychological drama: your drama is important for you; somebody else's drama, it's important for them – everybody thinks their drama is the most important drama in the universe. This is everybody's experience, because they are so identified with their own psychological drama. This psychological drama should not determine the nature of your life, because this is just a small happening compared to the life process. Life is a much deeper intelligence than intellect.

The mental body is composed of four fundamental dimensions. (...) The first dimension of the mind is called the *intellect, buddhi*, which in the modern world we are unnecessarily giving too much significance to, and we are paying an enormous price for this. You will come to a place where you'll know everything, but you'll know nothing of life significance, really. Today, you can see this happening to children: for the first time, this generation, you see ten, eleven or twelve year old children who look bored, because they've seen the cosmos through the screen of their mobile phone. Because today, by the time you are twelve, you had about all of the experiences which life has to offer, and you have seen the cosmos – what more? By the time you are fifteen, there is really no

purpose anymore for you to exist, for many of you. You should not be surprised, if this culture continues, in another 50 or 100 years' time, if 25% or 50% of the people commit suicide, you should not be surprised, because life needs some exuberance. If too much information happens to you without experience, that exuberance will be gone, and a false sense of knowing becomes so strong in you. This is the danger of intellect, because intellect wants to dissect everything. Intellect is like a scalpel: the sharper it is, the better it is. Intellect wants to dissect and know. Dissection works with some things, but not with all aspects of life. You can know a frog by dissecting a frog, but you cannot know a human being by dissecting a human being. You can know physical things by breaking them up, but life cannot be known by breaking it up. But this is the nature of the intellect. The whole modern science has evolved from the intellect, and because modern society has produced technological benefits, you can't argue against it. No, technology is fine; it brought much comfort and convenience – but it will not bring life to us. Intellect will be useful only depending upon what it is identified with and what is held, depending upon what holds this, how steadily.

The second dimension of the mind is called *ahankara*, which means *identity*. Whatever you're identified with, your intellect functions only around that. How consciously and how steadily your *ahankara* has been created will determine the effectiveness of your intellect. Just because it's sharp does not mean it will be effective, because a sharp intellect or a sharp knife can cause any amount of damage to you. If you have a sharp knife and you don't have a steady hand, you will cut yourself all over the place. That's all that's happening; human suffering is just this: you don't know how to hold this intellect in your hand properly; so every day, you're cutting yourself. All suffering is on self-help, because of your own mind causing this to you all the time. No matter what happens, people suffer; whichever way things happen, they suffer – because they do not know how to hold this intellect. If you had the mind of an earthworm, you would be quite peaceful, yes? You're trying in so many ways to reduce the sharpness of the intellect: by drink, by drug, by overeating, by doing all kinds of things – you're trying to somehow take away the sharpness of the intellect, because the damn thing hurts. – It hurts not because that's its nature; it hurts because you don't know how to hold it.

The third dimension of the mind is called *manas*, which is a huge volume of *memory*. It is not here or there; the entire body carries memory – *manomaya kosha* this is called, a huge sack of memory.

The fourth dimension of the mind is called *chitta*, *pure intelligence*. It is unsullied by memory; it has no trace of any kind of memory. If you touch this, then you have access to what you are referring to as *the Source of Creation*. Because all kind of things might have been fed to you – God is love, God is compassion, God is this, God is that, whatever – all these things have been made up, because whatever a person is deprived of, they will attribute that quality to their idea of God. Your ideas of God have come only because you do not know how this whole creation happened. Because you don't have an answer, you made it up.

For me, a human being becoming impactful means, how conscious have you become? This is very important. Because if you are in compulsive cycles, then your energy gets wasted in so many ways. 50% of life is gone on a daily basis just for basic maintenance of this life. For the remaining 50%, if you look at most people, every move they make with their body, their thought process, their emotions, you will see a whole lot of it is happening in compulsive cycles. Or in other words: if you are a little sensitive to life, then you will realize that *you* are the biggest issue in your life. But *you* are never the issue in your life: my thought, my emotion, my body, my energy are *my instruments of functioning*; they are not impediments in my life – but for 90% of the people, their own compulsions are ruling them most of the time.

Why are we compulsive? What is it that is compulsive about us? – *Compulsive* means, we are going to the same place again and again; it means, we are going in circles. The nature of physical existence in the universe is such: whether you take an individual atom or the cosmic space, everything that is physical is always in cyclical movement; everything goes through the cycles. The entire physical nature is born out of cyclical movement; that means compulsiveness. So do not understand compulsiveness as something bad; it is the basis of your existence. It is a good platform, but you are supposed to stand on the platform and act. Right now, you have *become* the platform; so somebody else will dance on you.

Joy is foundational to growth, isn't it? There is substantial medical and scientific evidence to show that only when you are in a pleasant state of experience, your body and your brain works at their best. There's no argument about that; there's enough evidence. So whatever impact or reaching goals or success we are looking at in the physical world, it is based on how well you harness your physiological and psychological process, isn't it? Whether your body and mind works against you or works for you, this is a big difference. There is enough evidence to show that only when you are in pleasant levels of experience, growth happens best. So obviously, joy is first, then growth. If you are joyful constantly and you have no fear of suffering because you understand that all human experience comes from within you, and so you have managed to create the kind of experience that you want, now growth is possible unbridled. If you have the fear of falling down and suffering, you will not go very high, isn't it?

Being influenced by this or that is inevitable; influence is not important. What is important is the intrinsic intelligence of a human being finding its full potential.

We are dying in installments: the more conclusions we make, the less alive we become. This is all that's happened to people; they call this knowledge – but this is not knowledge; this is just conclusions you are drawing about everything. We know how to use just about everything on this planet, but we do not know a damn thing about anything.

Belonging, believing or identifying simply means, you have found a way to sleep through your life. It's called *sleep*: you're partially dead; you've made conclusions which take away the life that bubbles within you. This is why people are walking around like they are dying in installments.

It's comfortable to simply believe something. To believe simply means that I have concretized assumptions which I know nothing about, isn't it? Either you know, or you do not know. Where does the belief come from? When you pretend to know what you actually do not know, that's belief. But you can't believe something all by yourself, so you need a hundred people around you. That's why believers always are in groups; seekers are alone.

You do not need to cultivate being a seeker; this is intrinsic to human intelligence. If you do not bullshit yourself with all kinds of things, falsely pretending to know what you actually do not know, then it's intrinsic to human intelligence to seek. You don't have to teach seeking; but you do have to teach belief systems. If you don't teach anything, everybody is a seeker – this is the nature of human intelligence; it naturally seeks. But people want to seek with the comfort of belief; they want to be in the belief system and then seek. This is like tying your boat to the pier and then rowing hard: it gives you a good exercise; it is like being on a treadmill – you can tone your muscles; it's perfectly fine. But you are not going anywhere.

Responsibility is just your *ability to respond*. You have to make up your mind: do you want to retain your ability to respond to every situation that may arise or may not arise in your life, or do you want to surrender your ability to respond?

If you don't take charge of the instruments of life, your physiology and your psychology, you are living accidentally.

If you are identified with your body, time is a big factor. But if a little space comes between you and your body, once you distance yourself from your physiological process, then time is not a factor. So, essentially, because of your rooting in your physical platform, which you call the body, which you built over a period of time from the accumulations that you have gathered from this planet, that body is the basis of your experience of time. If you distance yourself from that physical platform, there is no consequence of time on you.

Human intellect and human intelligence have broken out of a certain bond, which was there for every other creature, so that they could function like an automated machine through a certain instinctual process. What has happened with a human being with the process of evolution is: the human being has broken out of that instinctual process, and now there is an intelligence which has to function consciously. But functioning consciously means, every moment of life is an exploration, which is too scary for a whole lot of people. So, the best thing is, identify with something which gives you some sense of what you are. But this "some sense of what you are", which you took on, based on your social and cultural backgrounds, makes sense for your survival process, but not for explorative process. It doesn't explore life – it keeps you sane; it's a good solace. It helps you to sleep well in the night, but it doesn't awaken a different dimension of knowing; it doesn't awaken the possibility of exploring dimensions which are not yet within you. So, if this has to happen, the most important thing is to sit here, not identified with anything. See, it is so hard to remain uneducated in this world, because everybody wants to teach you something. Be simply the

way you are, not tangling up your intelligence to any particular thing, either your nationality or your religion or your race or your creed or your family or your gender or any kind of identity whatsoever – simply to be able to view your life just as a piece of life. If one does this, then you will see, perception will explode in ways that you have not imagined possible.

What is a social requirement is one thing; by social norm, you do certain things. What you do for the norm that exists, so that you do not collide into situations, is one thing; what you identify with is another thing. Any identity limits you; it takes away the fundamental possibility of what this life is. Identity is required for survival process, to manage day to day situations, but it is not an exploratory process.

“Wanting to know” is a fundamental need within a human being; it’s the nature of human intelligence. So, to continuously sustain that wonder, that sense of wanting to know, this is the basis of science and mysticism.

The problem with humanity is just this: from being a monkey or a chimpanzee to a human being, it’s actually a small change. From a chimpanzee to a human being, there is only 1,23% DNA difference, I believe. That’s not much, isn’t it? But what a phenomenal change in the intelligence that we have, compared to a chimpanzee or a monkey. So the problem is just this: we have an intellect which is sharp and we don’t know how to hold it. Whichever way we touch it, it cuts us. All the suffering, human suffering, on the planet is manufactured within their own mind. This is because this evolutionary process has happened so rapidly – we still have not got used to this intelligence; we are struggling as to how to manage this intelligence, and this intelligence is the basis of people’s suffering. If you remove half of their brain, most of the people will be peaceful. So right now, just to be peaceful and happy is such a huge challenge for most human beings, simply because they are not able to conduct the sparkle of their own intelligence. If they were a little bit dumber, they would be peaceful. Yes. So the problem is of plenty; the problem is not of paucity. It is just that there is a certain level of intelligence which we are not able to handle, because there is no stable platform. There is an intelligence here for which there is no stable platform. Unless we create a stable enough platform, this intelligence will not work for us; it will work against us, simply because it’s a sharp knife – if you do not know how to hold it, it will cut you up. Why we do not give a knife to a child’s hands is not because the knife is dangerous, but because the child’s hand is not steady enough – he could become dangerous to himself or to somebody else.

We look at creation as four different dimensions. *Sthula*, which means the gross physical creation; *Sookshma*, which means subtle, that means you cannot perceive them through sense organs, but if you hone your attention to a certain level, then you can perceive that. So this is called *vishesh gyan*, which means extraordinary perception, or it’s called *vigyan*: we are perceiving subtle things which our sense organs could not perceive, but still, they are in the realm of physicality, and they can be perceived, if you are willing to pay attention. The next dimension is called *shoonya*, which literally translates as emptiness, but emptiness is not the word – it is physicality without form; it is fundamental

material of physicality. The fourth dimension is called *shiva*, which means that which is not, that which is not physical at all.

The word *karma* literally translates as *action* or *doing*. We say that who you are right now is entirely your doing. The way you have structured yourself, knowingly or unknowingly, the kind of womb that you were born in – these are also unconscious choices; because you created a certain type of tendencies, that's where you moved, in search of that kind of tendencies. So, this software is building up all the time unconsciously. Whatever you are doing unconsciously, if you are willing, you can do the same thing consciously. If you can build so much software unconsciously, if you are willing, you can restructure that consciously. Distancing yourself from your genetic memory, there's an entire process – because this is very important if you want to be a unique fresh bubble of your own. Otherwise, you will see that when you are 45, suddenly you start walking like your father, talking like your mother, stuff is happening to you, you don't know... – don't underestimate these people; they won't give up so easily. Your grandfather may be dead and gone, but the guy wants to live through you. So, the thing is to distance yourself from genetic memory, so that you don't become a cyclical pattern of repetitiveness: you want to be a fresh life. That means, you have to recalibrate your software consciously. Anything you do unconsciously, you can also do consciously, if the necessary striving is there.

Do whatever the hell you want; just do it well. But for every action we perform, there is a consequence. If the consequence comes your way, if you're able to joyfully go through the consequence, you can do anything you wish. But if the consequence comes, you cry, if you are that kind, then you must control your action.

Your intelligence has turned against you simply because of the limited identities that you have taken: *my* family, *my* nation... See, if you strongly identify with something, you are willing to die for it, isn't it? If you are willing to die for it, you are also willing to kill for it, yes or no? Whatever you are willing to die for, you are also willing to kill for. Isn't that the only problem we have on this planet right now? Everybody is willing to die for something, and everybody is willing to kill for something: it could be family; it could be nation; it could be race, religion – whatever. Is it not time that you upgrade the way how you identify yourself? With what do you identify yourself? – There used to be a tradition in India: before the education, there was a process called "fixing the identity of the child". So one *mantra* they would start chanting meant "my identity is cosmic": my identification is not with my family, not with my father and mother, not with my nation, not with my religion – my identity is with the cosmos. See, if your identity is not with any limited thing, if you walk into this room, you actually do not have any problem with anybody. But if I am identified with my nation, or race, or religion, or whatever, then the moment I step into this room, I already have a problem, before I even meet you, before I even have a chance to get into trouble with you. When transactions begin, frictions can happen; that's a different matter – but just by looking at your face, I am having trouble, because I am identified with something very limited. Your intellect is such that, anything you identify with, your intellect will strive very hard to protect that identity, always. For

young people, it is very important that, if you cannot imagine a cosmic identity, then at least a global identity is a must for you – otherwise, you being empowered by education, you are the source of future disasters. Yes. See, why is all the cutting-edge technology first going into military use? National identity, isn't it? The most powerful tools in the world are all designed to eliminate you one day. So, our brains are working to protect our identity all the time. Why is it that I am walking on my side of the street, but if you are walking on the other side of the street, I am willing to slash you to take 10 dollars? Because my identity is only with this, not with that. So, at least, at least, identify with this planet, and all the life on this planet, if you can't think of cosmic.

When somebody acts in a stupid way, why would I get angry? When somebody is exhibiting how small they are: compassion – if I'm in a bad mood: pity; if I'm in a good mood: compassion.

Don't talk about freedom; talk about responsibility. If you talk about freedom, we will do freaky things. Freedom, justice, equality – these are all *consequences* of evolving a human being to a certain level of maturity. If you are not willing to do that work on an individual level, that each human being evolves to a certain level of maturity, then these things will only cause more trouble.

This is what the fundamental difference is [between Isha and a modern business]: I have continuously worked with people to make them devoted to the *process*; you guys are dedicated to the *goal*. Whatever you think is your goal right now, probably in five years it will not even be relevant to you. So you are wasting your life going in a direction which may not mean a damn thing to you in a little bit of time; it's possible. Unless you grow, you freeze – then the same damn thing will mean something to you all the time. Otherwise, if you are involved and growing, what means a lot today may not mean anything in another five years time. The last moment of your life, you will be dead – until then, it is just about how wonderful you can make the process of life. Right now, you are looking at life as a race: you must get to the finish line first.

You must be devoted to the *process*. If you are devoted to the process, the goal will happen. If you want to win the cricket game, do not hit the opponent; hit the bloody ball. "I want to beat the opponent" – of course you will make a fool of yourself!

In *yoga*, we have a system, we call this the *intelligence of ignorance*. We always identify with our ignorance – because our knowledge is so small, and our ignorance is boundless. So, if you identify with what you do not know, then your life will expand rapidly; your intelligence will stay alert throughout your life. If you identify with knowledge, your intelligence will sleep and you will make a fool of yourself.

When my trouble is your business (profit), will you give it up?
[f.i. war & the business of producing bullets; disease & the business of pharmaceuticals]

Where you have access and acceptance, that is where you choose to work. Otherwise, you are just wasting your time and energy. Because life is just a combination of time and energy: limited amount of time; limited amount of energy. If you run into walls here and there, time and energy will go, and your life will go. It is very important to run through the door, not through the wall. Where there is openness, there you go.

There is no meaning in the phenomena of life: there's no meaning to a sunrise, a flower, a cloud; there is no meaning to anything. Meaning exists only in the psychological framework of the human being, and these meanings exist only because we are constantly dipping into our memory. Vast memory is ruling us: we never experience life; we just recycle the same stuff. Memory needs to be carried loose, so that it is not sticking to us all of the time.

Everything that is not you, just keep it aside and go to bed, and see if you can just be conscious until the last moment when you fall asleep. Most people don't know when they fall asleep. If you make a little effort, just a few days, to stay conscious until you fall asleep, then you will see: you will wake up like a new-born baby every day.

People are practicing death in installments. See, if you're really super-alive, it's phantastic; if you're dead, it's good. But if I want to torture you, what will I do? I will not kill you; I will make you half alive – that's torture, isn't it? This is what is self-inflicted for most human beings right now.

Religion is an outcome of human longing to touch something beyond themselves, to touch that dimension which is not physical in nature. This human longing cannot be put down because of fancy ideals and ethics and whatever else they make up. When people are poor, you can propagate these kind of things, that survival and utilitarian aspects of life are everything – but once people do well, it won't mean anything to them; they will naturally look for something. In what form they look for it – is it dogmatic? is it a genuine search? – that is the only question.

You cannot count 1, 2, 3, and then go to infinite one day.

The seed of human experience is within us. If you take charge of it, then it is your choice what is your experience.

I gave away my heart very early in life, so nobody can break it.

Psychologically, you get yourself into such a cocoon that you think that you are an individual existence all by yourself. *Yoga* means that you consciously obliterate the boundaries of your individuality, because if you do not consciously obliterate the boundaries of your individuality, then unknowingly your life is "you versus the universe". It's a bad competition to get into. When you face such a big competition, it's not worth living. How people handle it, is: by obliterating the boundaries in unconscious ways a little bit. For instance, if somebody falls in love with somebody, then they open up the boundaries of their individuality a

little bit to somebody. This longing to break the boundaries, if it finds *physical expression*, we call this sexuality. If it finds *emotional expression*, we call this a love affair. If it finds a *mental expression*, it gets labeled as achievement, ambition, conquest, etc. If it finds a *conscious expression*, we call it *yoga*. If you obliterate your boundaries consciously, it is called *yoga*. (...) All other unconscious obliterations are only momentary; they do not last (sex, love, achievement). If you consciously obliterate your boundaries, you can sit here like the universe, with the same stability.

Living a simple life means, you are not entangled – you are enhanced, but not entangled. You make the kind of life arrangements that you can handle, isn't it? You don't try to make arrangements like somebody else, and then you don't know how to handle them. If you make arrangements that you don't need, then these arrangements will become entangling – you will be stuck in your own arrangements.

Wanting to be special is a sickness. It means, I want to sit on top of everybody's head.

If you live too early, you will not live too well.

Religion means, you seek an authority to be the Truth for you. *Spiritual process* means, you seek the Truth; an authority is never the Truth for you. Belief and spiritual process cannot go together. Spiritual process is a constant inquiry, a way of sharpening the questions, so that they dig deeper and deeper not into something else, but into yourself. *The nature of your existence is such that in your experience, the only thing which you can experience is yourself.* You actually believe that you are experiencing many things, but you only know everything the way that it happens *within you*; you do not know it any other way. Spiritual process is a constant effort to make sure that we have a plain mirror, so that we get to see everything just the way it is.

Confidence without clarity is a disastrous process. If you do not have clarity, at least you must have hesitation.

For someone who knows how to ride a bicycle, the faster it moves, the better it is; for someone who does not know how to ride a bicycle, the moment it moves, anxiety, fear and terror will happen – fundamentally, you have been given a very complex and sophisticated vehicle to pass through the process of this life, which is the human mechanism, with all its dimensions (body, mind, emotions, energy). Now you are going through life without knowing a thing about the complex mechanism that you're using. If it doesn't move, you're bored; if it moves, you're terrorized – there's no way out of it.

Tell me one thing that human beings are not suffering: if they are poor, they suffer poverty; if they are rich, they suffer taxes; if they are not educated, they suffer that; if you send them to school, they suffer the teacher; if they are not married, they suffer that; if they're married – well... Some say, life is suffering. No, it's not about life; you have not even touched life yet. All you're dealing with

is your own talk and emotion, and it's going crazy. You don't know how to manage the complex machine which you are driving; you don't know how to manage your thought; you don't know how to manage your emotion. All these things, all human experience, is essentially happening from within you. What happens from within you must happen in your way. What's happening in your mind is a dream, but even the dream is not happening in your way. Fundamentally, you are not happening the way you want yourself to be – that's the source of your misery; that's all your misery is... not your marriage, not your children, not poverty.

If you capture more life, then you will see, you have more grace. The depth, dimension and scope of your life is determined by how much life you capture within you. It doesn't matter what kind of body you have, what kind of intelligence you have – if you have not captured substantial life within you, you will live a small life. That's how it is. *Yoga* has a systematic process as to how to capture life. Otherwise, by high commitment, if you are absolutely devoted to what you are doing, you might manage to capture a larger portion of life.

Just with one dimension of life, life will not function. The most important thing is, how effervescent and large is the nature of life that you captured? And everyone of us has an unlimited access to it – but how much we will take depends on how consciously we conduct our life.

The human hardware and software are energized by what we are considering a life force – in *yoga*, we call this *prana*. It manifests itself in five basic dimensions (*pancha vayus*). 1) *Prana vayu* relates to breath and thought process. 2) *Samana vayu* is in charge of generating heat in the system. 3) *Udana vayu* is related to one's ability to feel sensations, one's buoyancy (upthrust, upward force) which makes us less available to gravity/physicality. Once *udana* starts receding, suddenly the body feels heavy. The weight has not changed; it has always been the same; but you can feel the weight much more, simply because *udana* is gone. 4) *Apana vayu*. 5) *Vyana vayu* is our preservative nature. If *vyana* recedes, even if you are alive, the body will begin to rot. Certain snake venoms can do this – you will not die, but the body will start falling apart.

Pranayama means, a method with which you want to take charge of the *pancha vayus*, the vital forces. The karmic memory of a person is imprinted on the *prana*; so in each person, the *prana* functions in a different manner, like smart electricity. *Prana* is unique to each individual. For a person who takes charge of his *prana*, 100% psychological balance is guaranteed, always, and about 90% physical balance, I would say. If you are psychologically in an extremely good place, then 10% of physical ailments is no problem at all. In how *prana* enters a newborn and in how *prana* leaves a body at death, in this it clearly has an intelligence in its own. One may not notice this unless one becomes very conscious about it. It's a world by itself, if you ask me. It takes a certain level of deep attention, or awareness. Just mental alertness is not enough.

Life comes in in stages, and life will go away in stages.

See, it is very difficult for people to understand this, but people who are with me for 25, 30 years, around me closely, even today, I don't have an opinion on them. Every day, when I look at them, I look at them afresh. As human beings, I never judge them for what they were yesterday.

Our experience is rooted in us. We refer to the human spine as the axis of the universe. Human experience is transmitted largely through the spine. And our experience is the basis of the universe for us. We know what we know through our enhanced perception, and this perception is transmitted through our spine. One of the most significant steps in the process of evolution is the making of the spine. When our neurological system started developing, the intelligence of life realized that it needs protection. The richness of our experience is mainly because of the richness of our neurological system. This needed protection, a conduit, so the spine came up. Another significant aspect of development is that the spine turned from horizontal into vertical. So in *yoga*, there is a whole system just training you how you can keep your spine erect, to be aligned always, whether in activity or at rest – do whatever you want, but be conscious where your spine is all the time, because this determines how sensitive you are to life. Because your whole experience is being transmitted, and our whole experience of the universe is just the way we experience it; we don't know any other way. Because of that, the spine is the center of the universe.

The very body that you carry is just the food that you eat. So, in what condition the life which you eat is, will determine the condition in which your life is in many ways. Food may be tasty, but often it is not alive enough for me; then I will not consume. If you're just conscious of this one thing, you will see that your sleep quota will go down. Another thing is that most people eat at least 50% more than what they need to eat. As an experiment, whatever you are eating, just cut it down by 50%. You will see, you will neither drop weight, nor will you become weak, nor will you become less energetic; the only thing that will happen is, your sleep quota will go down. Because you are eating by taste compulsion, now the extra processing of food is taking a toll on the system. Restfulness is also very important. If you sit here, if you are at total ease, you will see that the body is naturally restful. If you are very happy, on that day, you do not need much sleep or food, have you noticed this? That's all you have to do. If you remain very joyful every moment of your life, the food will come down, and the sleep will come down, naturally. Fundamentally, if you keep your life energies very exuberant, now you will see, the sleep quota will naturally come down. To keep your life energies exuberant, you should not be overfed. In the ashram, people eat only two meals a day: 10 in the morning, 7 in the evening.

What we call life is just a combination of two things: a certain amount of energy and a certain amount of time. Time is ticking away for all of us at the same pace. So there is no such a thing as time management. But you can manage your energy. If you raise your energies to a higher pitch of intensity, what somebody does in ten years, you may do it in one year – this, every human being can do.

Even if you sit here with closed eyes, you sit here in a dynamic way. You never become static, because static is dead. If everything becomes static, if inertia really sets in, that is death. So sleep, in *yoga*, is seen as death: you die every day. How long in a day do you want to die? 8 hours of sleep every day means: one third of your life, you're dead. Another 4 hours every day goes into various arrangements – when is the time to live, I'm asking? So if life is precious, the most important thing to do is to keep your energies in an exuberant way, so that life feels enhanced – because you cannot enhance time.

In the yogic system, we consider 84 years a complete human life.

We are here to live, just like all other creatures. It is just that, for them, this means eating, sleeping, reproducing and dying – then, their life is complete. Once you come as a human being, you can eat as much as you want, you can sleep as much as you want, you can reproduce as much as you want – somehow, life is not complete. This human life is longing for something else. And if that something else does not happen, then this existence feels so incomplete.

If there is not enough spirit in us, we infuse ourselves with outside spirits.

It is very important that you are not making this distinction, as to what is *work* and what is *life*. If what you're doing is not your life, please don't do it. It is very important to understand that, from the moment we are born to the moment we drop dead, we are only doing life, life and life alone – nothing else but life.

If you do something where your involvement is such that your involvement becomes bigger than your survival process, then the life energies naturally project outward. If you're not able to project your life energies outward, you will not do anything in the world which is significant in other people's experience. If you sit here, if you can have 10% turned inwards and 90% outwards, you will see that, whatever you do, people will be phenomenally impressed. If you have 90% inwards and 10% outwards, you may do great things, but, whatever you do, nobody will be impressed. You have to keep your instinct of self-preservation out of the way. There is an instinct of self-preservation, and there is a longing to expand. If you hold on to the instinct of self-preservation, you build walls around yourself. And these walls of self-preservation are also the walls of self-imprisonment. But if your longing to expand becomes the prime factor in your life, you will see that your life energies become more outward projected, and you will find phenomenal results with everything you do – whatever skills you have, they will multiply. If it's inward projected, it's a drag – and you will be looking forward to the weekend.

When it comes to body and when it comes to mind, when it comes to physical competence and intellectual competence, when it comes to external activity, no two human beings are equal. This is the way the world is, and it is wonderful. But when it comes to inner possibilities, all of us are equally competent. So first, become blissful; then, we'll see what the hell you can do.

People are always trying to define themselves by what they do. This is what I am trying to change in the world: what you do should not define who you are; who you are should define what you do. So, if who I am is really nothing, then I do whatever is needed.

Before you touch the world, you must be clean.

One must understand: just organizing the external situation is not going to bring human well-being. You can organize comfort, convenience, survival, but you cannot organize well-being. *Well-being is something that you have to earn within yourself.* The inner organization of yourself is very important, because otherwise, all the bounty that science and technology is offering us will go to waste.

You have to be at your best at every moment. There is no such a thing as, “this is important; that is not important”.

We gave you a very complex machine, the mind, and you did not bother to read the user’s manual; now all kinds of things will speak. I want you to understand this: in the cases of schizophrenia studies, the largest number of personalities that have manifested in one human being is 32 full scale personalities – that is 32 personalities living in the same body. That is how complex mind is; it has a million chambers, and you will never get to explore all of it. But the important thing is: you must establish within yourself that there is only one *you*. Only then you can use this – otherwise, it uses you. Right now, your own intellect has taken over your life and is destroying you. If I leave you in a room, all by yourself, and you are capable of being miserable, you are sitting alone and you are suffering, this means that you are in bad company. You have to fix this one thing: that *this one* is never bad company; that *this one* is the best company you have. If you are causing trouble to *this one*, then obviously you have not figured out the fundamentals of your own existence.

Most of the society is in different levels of madness, in socially accepted levels of madness – you have to graduate to go into an asylum. But because everybody is in the same state of suffering, we think it’s normal.

All of us have a body, a mind, emotions and energies. If you put your body as a leading edge of your life, then the only thing you can think of is eating, sleeping, copulation and reproduction. If your mind is the leading edge, your intellect is excited about something else than sex when you are age 14. But your intellect only functions from the limited data that you have gathered in your head. If you go by the *body*, you will do very limited things. If you go by the *intellect*, you will do next level of limited things. If you go by your *emotions*, then the way you think is the way you feel – it’s just that emotions are a little bit juicier. But your *life energies* will be constantly working for your well-being every moment of your life, whatever you do. This is not about getting rid of one aspect (f.i. the body); all of them are important. But you have to decide which shall be the leading edge. *If you want to be led towards a significant life, then your life energies should be the leading edge; and the other dimensions should follow* – otherwise, you will get entangled.

Emotions are not about other people and life situations; emotions are not a reaction to something external. You can sit here silently and create whatever emotions you want all by yourself. Emotion, intelligence, body and energies are about this life, not about something external – this is all the equipment we got.

There is a direction which we have taken, but you must be dedicated to the *process* – otherwise, the goal is just a hallucination. In *yoga*, we say: “if you have one eye on the goal, you have only one eye to find your way” – it’s inefficient. Do well whatever you are doing right now.

I want to destroy all the heavens, because the very idea that there is a better place to live than this is a crime.

If your identity shifts beyond your biological self, you will see that the biological needs will completely disappear.

Everything is made up; the only reality is zero.

The inevitability of this moment is the fundamental on which the creation has happened. This moment is inevitable; this moment is eternity – eternity happens through this moment: eternally, it has been this moment, isn’t it so? So this moment is not small, and this moment is not big; this moment is nothing, and this moment is everything.

The moment you say: “this moment is inevitable”, a natural acceptance is happening within you. Once there is a natural acceptance within you of what is happening right now, you just live in a state of acceptance, moment to moment. Let’s see what happens to you in terms of experience. If good things happen to us, let us live in the moment. If bad things happen to us, can we run away from the moment? – That’s all there is, and that’s everything. That’s not a limitation; that’s your freedom. This is how life is structured: the things which you think to be opposites are actually built into each other – that is the beauty of life.

Time and space are the creation of your mind: there is no such thing as time and space; what is big and what is small is your idea – it is not a reality.

You can’t be a driver without knowing the machine. And, if you want to drive at highest speed, if you want to drive at that edge, you have to know every damn thing about the machine – you have to know your machine absolutely.

In every place, there are situations – in Mumbai, in the village, in the forest. And the moment is the building block of the situation. So first, you learn to handle the brick: if you don’t know how to place the brick properly, your building is going to crash on your head.

Philosophy means, phantastic explanations for things that cannot be explained. Life cannot be explained; it can only be experienced.

With logic, you are always splitting the world into many parts, but existence is happening as one, isn't it? This whole existence is happening in one energy, as one rhythm.

You stand at the right bank of the river; you look at the left bank and you don't like it – so you want to eliminate the left bank. Please see: if you manage to eliminate the left bank, you will eliminate the river and the right bank, yes? Only if you are willing to accept the left bank, then the river can be, then the right bank can be – otherwise, it cannot be. It is only in acceptance that life is happening: life is a huge acceptance, everything the way it is. Only if you accept, you can perform true action – otherwise, your life is just a series of reactions. When you are reacting to something or somebody, you are not yourself: you are a slave; you are in deep enslavement with external situations – then, your intelligence will never flower; then, your intelligence will never find expression. No intelligent thing can happen in a situation where you are reacting; intelligent action can happen only if you accept what is there right now, and then you see.

If you want to conquer something, that means you want to put something down and sit on top of it. If that's your intention, then there is not going to be any well-being – neither for you, nor for anybody around you. No conquerors were ever happy themselves; all they had was the satisfaction that there was somebody beneath them. They were not happy, because once you conquer somebody, you have to constantly live in your own fears and insecurities. If intelligence has to flower, purposeful action has to come out of you through acceptance and intelligent decision making. In every generation, just a few minds will function intelligently; the rest are just reacting and reacting and reacting.

You are doing some action with total involvement and a great sense of joy about it. When something you do is giving you such great joy, do you expect a reward? There is no *karma*; there is action and it is not binding at all – once there is a distance, it is not binding. Now you can throw yourself into the world, because there is no fear of suffering; you can live your life to the hilt. You can just play with life whichever way you want, but life will not leave a single scratch upon you. Right now, the simple process of life is leaving people wounded, isn't it? Even people who are reasonably successful and well-to-do, if you lift their top cover, you will see, they are full of wounds within themselves. This is simply because the simple process of life is taking such a toll – because everything is stored and stored and stored. To the extent that you see that you are responsible, that this is my *karma*, now reactionary *karma* will go away.

Acceptance gives you the freedom to function. If you do not accept, you will get entanglement; that's all the difference is.

If you see that you are responsible, even unpleasantness can be transformed into wisdom. If you are intelligent, if you respond to life consciously, you can make all life experiences into a process of growth, a process of enriching your life. Otherwise, you will carry ugliness right through your life. Somebody did something for a moment, and you do the same thing to yourself for a whole lifetime – definitely you are a worse criminal than that person, isn't it?

All you have to do is to think about the next step. If you think about the Ultimate, you will become hallucinatory.

[About people's conceptions of God:] You're too full of yourself, that's why all these imaginations.

By choosing to live either in a family or in a forest, you only choose a certain atmosphere to live in. What is within you will not change because of this choice. What kind of external arrangements you make for your own life has nothing to do with your inner dimensions. Whatever kind of atmosphere is suitable for you, you choose that.

Alcohol is not against spirituality; unawareness is against spirituality. If with alcohol, you become unaware, then alcohol is against spirituality. Instead of going on wine, it's better to go on divine.

Once something has become a conscious process, it no more determines the course of your life; it is no more compulsively working within you – it is something that you decide. That is how human life should be: you're not pushed or pulled into anything.

Most of our dreams are just unfulfilled desire. All your scattered desires cannot be fulfilled in life, so your mind is working overtime in the night, fulfilling your desires in phantasy ways. Because you have no control over this, you are not playing the desires – the desires are playing you. "I want this" – immediately a certain amount of my energy is invested in that direction. "I want this, this, this and that" – you do this with 100 different things; you become all scattered. You become so scattered, your mind is just going on and on with meaningless thought, because constantly your energy is being thrown in different directions. If you create *a big longing for one thing in particular*, then all the scattering will disappear: all your energy is invested in *one direction*.

Without understanding the fundamental nature of the mind, if you are trying to do something head on with it, you will go crazy. So many things that you think you want to forget, you will never forget; things that you think you want to remember, you always forget – isn't it? Yes or no? Because without understanding the fundamentals of mind, we are trying to operate the mind. The mind is the most sophisticated machine on the planet, but you are going at it "somehow". If you go at it "somehow", sometimes it works – most of the time, unfortunately, people's minds are working against those people. When you were 5 years of age, how joyful you were, and today, how joyful you are – has it gone up or gone down? That means, your mind is working against you. If you have a sharp knife, you must have a steady hand. If you have a very sharp knife, you must have a very steady hand. With an unsteady hand, you will either cut yourself or cut somebody else. That's why *yoga* – to create a very steady hand with which the sharp knife can be used the way we want. If the mind has no stable platform, it's all over the place. Once the mind begins to work *for* you, once you are blissful by your own nature, then there is no fear of suffering. Once you become like this within yourself, that your mind takes instructions from you, that

“whatever happens, I will keep *this* blissful”, then *this* will become magic, *this* will become a phantastic instrument of well-being – now, you would like to explore the full depth and dimension of this life.

If you don’t know who you are, is there any meaning to anything that you are doing right now? You don’t know who you are, what you are, but you’re busy with life – does it make any sense? The only thing which sustains you is that the crowd is with you, not with me, isn’t it? Apart from that, there is nothing else. If you were the only man who did not know who you are, you would go insane, isn’t it? But because you’re *all* in the asylum, you think that you’re okay – you have a lot of company. (...) “Who am I?” – most of your life, you’re not even aware of the question itself. A large mass of people have just assumed all kinds of identities, and they just believe “this is it”, “I’m this”, “I’m that” – something that is convenient for them. You can’t even talk to them.

When it comes to Creation, you never ask *why*; you only ask *how*. Otherwise, if you just believe (or disbelieve) a story, you are not in any way closer to reality than you are right now, isn’t it? Even if I am telling you a true story, then, in your experience, it is just a story, isn’t it? Stories will entertain you; stories will solace you – but stories will not liberate you. So, first of all, you must decide: are you looking for solace, or are you looking for a solution? People have been focusing on how to put you to sleep, so they told you stories. And if you ask *why*, I can only tell you a story, isn’t it?

When your experience of life has become burdensome somehow, that’s when you ask: “Why all this creation?” – But then, the question comes from the wrong perspective (i.e. the perspective of temporary unhappiness with your personal life circumstances). You are not asking the question with the right depth in it – you are asking the question very easily, very casually, because still you do not know the pain of ignorance; still you are not being torn apart by the pain of ignorance. If such a thing was happening, then I would answer this question in a completely different way.

What you call as *myself* is a certain level of awareness, isn’t it? If your awareness disappears, *you* also disappear, isn’t it so? Right now, your awareness is happening in a minimal way – we want to extend this awareness to every aspect of who I am, so that who I am becomes a completely conscious process. Awareness has become a small thing, simply because it is lost in two heaps: the heap of food that you gather as body, and the heap of impressions that you gather as mind. If you separate awareness from the two heaps, if you clear awareness up and crank up the voltage, then you will see more of yourself than ever before.

Anything that is beyond your present level of understanding, that’s a miracle for you, isn’t it?

If you allow your intelligence to function, to take you ahead, then your intelligence is incapable of believing anything, isn't it so? Your intelligence wants to know, not to believe. But you are forsaking your intelligence: because your fear is so dominant, you feel comfortable in believing. So if you allow your intelligence to function, then all your beliefs will fall apart, because you know that you don't know, isn't it? But it takes a lot of pressure to make you admit it. When you don't know, everything becomes bright; then your intelligence is all hyped up and looking. But when you assume that you know, then everything settles down and you go on with your stupid life, isn't it? (...) If devotion comes, fear will not exist in you. If fear exists, that means devotion has not come.

[About aligning energies:] Your car has four wheels: your body, mind, emotion, and the energies. Your life energies will always immediately be in the direction of life; life will be their priority, always. To a large extent, that is so with the body also. "To be or not to be?" is just mental nonsense. Just hold your nose and close your mouth for five minutes, and the body will say "To be! To be! To be!" – there's no "not to be", because the body is life oriented. Life energies are 100% life oriented; body is largely life oriented – but mind can freak out on anything. Mind is a liar: every day, it will tell you something and make you believe it; tomorrow, it will make you feel like a fool for what you believed yesterday. Isn't it so? So now, the thing is: shall we put our life energies in the direction of our mind, or shall we put our mind in the direction of our life energies? What should we do?

There's nothing wrong in any life choice or life decision, but to make misery out of it, that's wrong. If you just address that one issue, everything will be settled. That's what we are looking at: how not to make misery out of everything. If you know how to walk through this world joyfully, through marriage and divorce and celibacy and everything, if you know how to walk through this joyfully, what is the problem? Whatever you do is beautiful, isn't it? – If you don't even know how to be happy, don't have such goals as Self-realization; they are very far away from you. Happiness is not just a state of mind; it is the basis of the quality of life that you live here. If you're capable of going through this world joyfully, then you can talk about going beyond. For a person who is constantly creating inner battles all the time, how will he deal with the bondages of life and how will he transcend that? Let me tell you, there is no way. – For a blissful person, there is no right thing to do in your life, and there is no wrong thing to do in your life. Happiness is not at stake.

See, I want you to look at yourself carefully. Don't look at humanity; look at yourself. You're a complete unit by yourself. You're under various influences on a daily basis – parental influences, religious influences, education influences, social influences – various forces that try to influence you and try to make you think and feel in different ways. There are very few rare moments, if at all you have any, that you are beyond these influences; most of the time, you are within the framework of these influences. Or in other words: there are very few rare moments when your intelligence functions unfettered – otherwise, it is fettered with these influences all the time. When your intelligence is badly burdened by external influences, then it doesn't see anything the way it is; it's all distorted.

From the moment you are born, in so many ways, people are trying to teach you how to become a strong identity, all the time. See, why they are teaching you religion is not because they think that this is the way to God, but because religion gives you a strong sense of identity: suddenly, you seem to be more sure about what you are doing. You tend to become stupid, because your intelligence gets completely hijacked. In any society, if you belong to the dominant community there, your survival is well taken care of, generally. But that won't lead to your inner well-being; that just creates external security. Because in so many ways, the most fundamental thing you seek is security; you always seek how to identify with more and more things, so that you become socially and in any other way secure, psychologically secure within yourself. But actually, if you look at your life, there is no such thing as security: whatever you might have done with your life, it is still not secure. You're healthy, you're wealthy, you're young, everything is fine – but tomorrow morning, you may be dead. So there is no real security, whatever planning you do. Always you will be insecure, and always you will be trying to do something about it, endlessly. When your whole energy, your whole existence, is somehow about becoming secure, that means in some way ensuring your survival, whatever level of survival – physical, social, financial, psychological, emotional – then no other possibility will happen, because nothing else will be important to you. Right now, a man is hungry and he wants to eat; now, you talk to him about God – is he interested? Now, you talk to him about enlightenment – is he interested? When God appears, people will ask for food and security – because if survival is dominant in you, you cannot think beyond it. It's a huge force by itself. If you don't look beyond it, the other possibilities of life never arise.

For me, if I simply sit here, I will sit here without a single thought on my mind. Because I am existing in such a powerful way, thought is just a small happening for me. My existence is far, far bigger than my thought. Right now, people are trying to make their thought far bigger than their existence. (...) If you stretch the intellect beyond a certain point, you will crack up – you will definitely crack up. So, thought being so important is a very unhealthy way to approach life. Initially, it gives you a thrill, because you can create a few things with your thought. See, if you generate a powerful thought, you can make certain things happen; you can have a certain power over other people and over situations. This will give you a high, but it is not an ultimate solution to life. You may be effective in the world, but within yourself, you're still a mess – what is the point? This is happening to a lot of successful people, isn't it – the whole stars in the world, the whole world worships them and thinks they are great, but most of them are just breaking down, isn't it? Looking good in ten people's eyes is not going to change the experience of your life. If you sit here, you are absolutely blissful – this is what changes the experience of your life. Whatever you think about yourself, whatever the whole world thinks about yourself, has no existential relevance. It has only psychological relevance, maybe social relevance – but no existential relevance. So when we say, a *spiritual process*, we are talking about an existential dimension, not a psychological dimension, not a social dimension.

If you drop desire, the life energy will lose its desire to hold on to the body – that's death. What you call as life and what you call as desire are just two different names for the same thing.

What objects you offer to your desire is according to your exposure to life: according to your exposure to life, you choose.

Desire is something that you create to play a certain game. During the 90 minutes you play soccer, kicking the ball between the goal posts must be more important than your life itself – then only there is a soccer game, isn't it? You must play the game like this is the ultimate thing in your life. Suddenly, everybody involved is in great levels of intensity and experience, so much life happening, simply because of the stupid desire to kick the ball between two posts – can you see that? Now, this is a conscious desire, so it's so beautiful. Suppose you forgot this and, wherever you see two poles, you want to kick the ball between that – now this is madness, yes or no? When desiring is a conscious process, it is so beautiful; it's all excitement and fun. The moment it is not conscious, it is ugly and madness. So, desire is just a tool. Right now, you are not consciously desiring – your desires are consuming you. That's not the way it should be. When you're joyful by your own nature, now, you're consciously desiring: when you want, you throw it out and play a game; when you don't want, you roll it back and keep it – that's how desire should be.

This is one problem with your mind: your mind does not stay in "I don't know"; it wants to jump into some conclusion soon, because it's uncomfortable to be with "I don't know". But I want you to be uncomfortable; I want you to know the pain of ignorance. Only when you suffer the pain of ignorance, when it tears you, then you want to know in a very deep way. When the longing is deep, nobody can deny it to you. The reason why it's been denied to you is, you never allowed the longing to become deep. You just satisfied yourself with assumptions, with beliefs. If the longing sinks deep enough, how can you remain ignorant? It's not possible.

If you plant a mango seed, only mangoes will come – that much is determined, isn't it? But how big the mangoes will be, how many mangoes there will be, whether there will be mangoes at all, how long there will be mangoes – all these things are in our hands. Whether there are going to be mangoes from a mango seed, this too is in our hands, if we dig deep enough into life. Nothing is predetermined. Whatever is determined has been determined by you unconsciously. Nobody else is predetermining anything for you – you unconsciously write your own software through the karmic process; accordingly your life functions. Whichever way you wrote your software, that is the way you think, that's the way you feel, that's the way you act, that's what you invite into your life. Depending on what kind of *karma* you generate within you, it is that kind of fragrance that you throw out; and depending on what kind of fragrance you throw out into the world, that is the kind of thing that you invite for your life. Some people seem to be constantly meeting pleasant things; some people seem to be constantly meeting unpleasant things. Do you see this? Somehow it is, one after another, one after another, it is coming. It all depends on what kind of stuff

you are throwing out. (...) So right now, we are focusing on that aspect of life, to bring a certain sense of pleasantness which cannot be disturbed from the outside, and to exude a certain kind of pleasantness that naturally will attract pleasant things in the world towards you. Not all of us meet the same level of pleasantness in the world; not all of us meet the same level of unpleasantness in the world – we all meet in different grades; and this largely depends on what you're throwing out every moment of your life. This is not just talk and emotion; this is much deeper than that. So, this is what we are looking at here: your life is determined out of your unconsciousness; and if you make yourself conscious, all those things can be altered.

To create something beautiful, the most important thing is a sense of abandon, to forget yourself for a moment.

Whether it comes from a plant or from a factory, fundamentally why people are using drugs is, it gives them a crack in their mind where they can see life without the filter of the mind. That's why people get hooked – it gives them a vision of life so magnificent that they want to have it all the time. But after some time, it's just an addiction, they can't help it. Initially, it was like a burst of freedom and experience which is beyond normal perception of life, but after some time, it's a deep enslavement. The experience given is not the chemical – the chemical is just creating a certain break in your mental process, that you are able to see life beyond that. The longing is fine, but the method is stupid and hopeless. They thought they were going on a spiritual path, but all that happened was, people ended up as junkies: their body is ruined; their mind is ruined; they are good for nothing – they become like that. *Yoga* means, to have an experience which is a millionfold more than that, and to be able to sustain it every moment of your life, without a negative impact on your life. The longing to experience something more than you are right now is in everybody. The question is how to get there in a way where you can sustain it. If you take an input from outside, obviously you cannot sustain it. I am stoned 24 hours, but I am balanced enough to conduct myself in the world – because this is not coming from any external input.

Even without a drug, it can happen: “moments of danger”. There are many, many people in the world today who want to do very risky activities. Because those few moments of extreme danger just still your mind: now, you have an experience which is like an explosion of energy in the body. So many things happen, go wrong – but you see people going for it again and again and again? Because it's such a big experience: in those moments of extreme danger, your mind is still.

Another way: spiritual experience may just happen to you, suddenly, and you're not even ready for it – because you created certain situations. I have met many, many people who did something, this or that, and suddenly, they had a huge spiritual experience – but that is just for one situation, a few moments. And when they came back, they were completely broken. They become totally miserable, depressed, broken... because they saw something so big, they experienced something so big, and now, they're back to their ordinary existence – they cannot take it. People become hugely depressed. These processes are pushing people

into big experiences and dropping them. *Yoga* means, we are not looking at flipping you into an experience and dropping you back – we are talking about slowly building a ladder, where gradually you climb and look beyond the wall. If you have sense, the momentary experience which flips you beyond the wall might inspire you to somehow go beyond the wall; otherwise, it will depress you. So, sudden experiences, without the necessary preparation, will always turn against us.

All the beautiful things in life don't happen with a bang; they happen very gently. So your inner flowering also has to happen that way.

When the system is not integrated, but composed of pieces which are not authentically your own, but which you have picked up here and there, then you create confusion. When it is confused, the whole system is running in a stressful way: there is disharmony in the system; it will not settle. Take responsibility; make your life your own. You don't need a million pieces or teachings – you just need a simple method you start working with; it will lead you on.

Happiness is the way you are. It is not the way you think; and it is not a concept in your head – it is just an inner experience. Only when you know happiness, life happens to you; otherwise, only mind happens to you. When life is happening to you, you are very happy; when just mind is happening to you, sometimes you are happy, sometimes you are unhappy. Now fundamentally, what we are trying to do here is, to move you from thinking about life to experiencing life. This life can only be *experienced* – what you think, what you conceptualize, what you philosophize, all of this has no meaning. How intensely you experience it, that is how much you know it, isn't it? And how deeply you respond to it, that is how deeply you experience it, isn't it? And responsibility is giving you the ability to choose your action. If it is necessary to do something, you learn to do it; if it is not necessary, you learn to stay away from it, isn't it? If you are not responding, but reacting to situations around you, you will be in compulsive action.

This moment is inevitable; everything else is constantly changing – stand on that, because it is stable. Do not stand on your qualifications, your job, your marriage, your children – all of this, tomorrow morning, can become something else. This moment, this one thing is unchanging, always, eternally. That's why I am telling you: keep your feet on it, so that no matter how the world spins around you, still you are standing on stable ground – then, you can enjoy the rollercoaster. This moment is always inevitable; the inevitability of this moment is constant, isn't it?

For anything which you experience as a part of yourself (such as your children, your family), you do not need any morality: effortlessly you can be good; you do not have to *try* to be good. Morality means, you're *trying* to be good, isn't it? But *yoga* means, *to experience everything as a part of yourself*. It is just a question of your willingness. And, if you are willing, you can experience everything as a part of yourself. And when you experience everything as a part of yourself, you do not need morality. When you experience what is you and what is not you, only then you need morality; with morals, you only *try to be good*; you will never *become good* – please see this. You can hold back your hands, but you can't hold back

your mind. If you want to be really good, you have to make everybody in the world not okay: “he’s not okay, she’s not okay, but I am a good man.” – For those people who think they are very good in their minds, nobody is okay; have you noticed this? If nobody is okay in the world, it is not a question of goodness – it just means that you are sick in your head; that is all it means. It is madness, and your goodness is just the same kind of madness. Your morality will not evolve you; you need to recognize life as life.

Karma does not determine what is around you; *karma* only determines the experience of your life. *Karma* is just a cause; whatever is right now is the effect.

If you are aware how fragile life is, subject to so many things that you don’t even understand, you will live very sensibly. If you know how life any moment can turn upside down, you will walk on this planet very gently. If you are aware every day that you are mortal, you will see, lots of your nonsense will disappear. You have no time for all that; you will have no time for foolishness – you will only do what is necessary. It is only by being reminded of death that you turn spiritual; not by being reminded of God, please notice. Otherwise, you just try to enhance your survival: “dear God, please do this for me, please do that for me”. And if God does it, you become terribly arrogant.

The many forms of Adiyogi have been intentionally crafted so that you cannot digest him easily. He has a snake around his neck; he wears a garland of skulls; he is the most uncivilized being – and yet, he has such a powerful radiance around him that you cannot stay away from him. There is a helpless attraction and a powerful repulsion at the same time. The whole idea behind fashioning such an image – that embodies life and death all at once – is to make the point that whatever you call *divine* is something that can never be logically understood: it can be experienced, but never grasped.

There is a deep science at work here: Adiyogi is given this kind of impossible character because if you can accept him, you can accept everyone in the world. If you can accept Adiyogi, you have, in fact, accepted all of existence in one stroke.

Everything that you do should be towards enhancing your own nature. Wherever you are, whatever you are doing, everything you do can be used as a spiritual process, as a process of growth. It’s 24 hours through – whatever you do, you make it into a *yoga*. Every single act in your life, you make it into a process of growth – only then it will work. Part-time spirituality doesn’t work. *Yoga* does not take you away from anything – it enhances your life.

You want to be exuberantly alive, and still be peaceful – this is beautiful. If you live in fear, you are killing yourself and keeping yourself half alive. That’s not an answer; that’s not a solution at all.

Your whole experience of life is *within you*; the whole life process happens *within you*. And what is within you should happen the way you want it, isn’t it? Most people have not realized the immensity of being human; that’s why so much God-talk is happening all the time. They are always talking about another place better

than this – because you have not realized what it means to be human. This process, the experiential dimension of your life, is happening from within.

If in pursuit of your happiness, you try to fix the world, it is like walking an endless distance. If you turn around, it is right here, because the basis of your experience is within you. So what we are looking for is to turn around, not to accumulate more nonsense than you already have. *Yoga* is a simple method, a simple technology to turn inward.

In this mind, can you forcefully take one thought and throw it out? In this mind, there is no subtraction and division – there is only addition and multiplication. Whatever you try to do, it will be +1; if you try hard, it will be multiplication. You cannot do forceful things with your mind. Do you want to control your mind, or do you want to liberate your mind?

If you don't know how to drive and you get into a car, it will take your life, isn't it? That's all that's happening. Without knowing how to properly handle this mechanism, we are trying to use it through this life – and it's becoming disastrous. There is no clarity about how to handle this, but people have all kinds of beliefs within them which make them confident. Confidence without clarity is always hugely disastrous. By accident, you might make anything happen, but that's not the point. At least your interiority should not happen by chance. This is not a belief system; this is a technology – unless you learn how to use it, it will not work.

There are only four things you can do: use your intelligence (*jnana yoga*), emotions (*bhakti yoga*), energies (*kriya yoga*) or physical action (*karma yoga*). This is all you are doing, whatever you do. – Now, which one should I use? This is like asking: I am driving a car – on which wheel shall I drive? If you are such a good driver, you might drive on only one wheel, and you might get there, but nobody else will drive with you. If you pursue only one aspect of *yoga*, you will become socially incompatible. Depending on the way you are made, depending on which quality is prevalent in you, you must mix all four dimensions of *yoga* in the right proportions, in proper alignment – otherwise, you don't really go anywhere.

The content of your desire is a social thing, a cultural thing – it is in reaction to the situations in which you exist. The content is a socially cultivated thing; it is not even about you. But the desiring process itself is universal, isn't it? Wherever you are, whenever you live, you still desire, isn't it? *What you desire* may be a cultivated process, but *whether you desire*, there is no choice about it: you anyway desire something. In a sense, desire is the very basis of your existence. No matter what you desire, your desire is a spiritual process, because it is seeking to become boundless. But the problem is, you are conducting it unconsciously. If a desire is unconscious, it becomes compulsive; and anything that is compulsive becomes ugly, isn't it? We have to conduct the desire *consciously*. Your problem is this: whatever role you pick up, in no time you get so badly identified with it, you think you are that. And the whole society is in the same condition, so we think it is alright. In a mental asylum, if you're normal, it's

a problem, isn't it? If someone comes along who is really normal, he gets stoned to death, he gets crucified, he gets hanged, he gets burned, he gets persecuted: one man having too much sanity, talking too much sense – people couldn't stand it; they had to destroy him, isn't it?

You're a *nobody* – but now, you have become a *somebody*. If you are aware of your nobodiness, and you act out your somebodiness in the world, this is called enlightenment. If you have forgotten your original nature, if you have forgotten your nobodiness and have become a somebody, if you believe that you are a somebody, this is the basis of your ignorance. Only a somebody can suffer in the world. This body is only a heap of food that you have eaten, isn't it? This mind is only a heap of impressions that you have gathered over time. You are not this body; you are not this mind – this has to become your living experience; right now, it is only an idea. There has to be a clear distinction between what is *you* and what is *yours*. Once there is a space between you and your body, once there is a space between you and your mind, then this is the end of suffering. One who is above his intellect is a *Buddha*; one who is trapped in his intellect is a nonstop suffering human being. All your anxieties, fears, problems are sitting right behind you all the time. Once you're into your intellect, suffering is inevitable – because the basic function of the intellect is to discriminate, to divide the world into a million parts. The more intellectual a human being becomes, the more his capacity to suffer, isn't it? If you go below your intellect, there is much less suffering: animals are not suffering like human beings; their suffering is mostly physical. The human being, which was below the intellect, has evolved into the intellect; the only way out of this is to go *beyond the intellect*. But now, in society, we have created so many ways to escape the intellect, so many addictive ways to go below the intellect for a period of time in order to escape the torture of the mind: alcohol, drugs, excessive eating, all kinds of excessive indulgence in pleasures, entertainment and distractions. But if the effect of the drug is over, the intellect catches up with you with renewed vigor; and then, there is more suffering than ever before... – so the dosage of the drug has to go on increasing. And after some time, you will need it 24 hours per day. – All of this because we do not know how to handle ourselves; we are operating our sophisticated mechanism accidentally. This human mechanism is the only basis for the life experience: you have no other way to experience anything in this existence; this is the only way. The more you know about this mechanism, the better you can use it; the deeper your knowledge about this, the more empowered you are to go through the process of life. As long as you identify with the mental process, fear is a natural consequence.

Vibrating the sound “a” takes the message to every cell in the body.

Suffering does not come because of any particular life situation; suffering comes because you look at something which somebody else has and which you don't have – now you are making yourself miserable, isn't it? Your *karma* is not in what is happening to you; your *karma* is in the way you are responding to it, isn't it? You're capable of suffering just about anything, aren't you? You are not able to go to school, you're suffering; you have to go to school, you're suffering; you're unemployed, you're suffering; you have to go to work, you're suffering; you have

no partner, you're suffering; you're married, now you are really suffering. No children, you're suffering; children – now aren't you suffering? You're not suffering because of this or that; you're suffering because that's the way you made yourself – and that's what you need to look at. Suffering is happening because of your ignorance; it is not happening because of the things around you. If you're good at torturing yourself, you must be wonderful at torturing other people. Anybody who is willing to torture himself will not spare other people – he will do it with good intentions, but he will make sure that other people suffer too. And people do it all the time. Suffering is a choice.

Vasanas are unconscious desires, tendencies which move you in certain ways. Instead of choosing conscious desires, if you go by your *vasanas*, then whichever your tendencies are, in that way you float around. Being in the body is most important for the intellect, because now the intellect has the option of choosing your desire whichever way you want, playing your desire whichever way you want, and, at the same time, to be free from it. When you're functioning by tendencies, you're functioning compulsively – no more consciously, isn't it? If you go by your tendencies, you're a compulsive being. Only if you go by your conscious desires, then you are a conscious being.

The root problem is that you have identified yourself with things that you are not. The moment you get yourself into a false identity, then your intelligence is hijacked: you have subjugated your intelligence to your identifications; you can't see anything straight. If you identify yourself with that which you are not, then suffering is inevitable.

You suffer that which happened ten years ago; you suffer that which you think will happen the day after tomorrow, isn't it so? – What happened ten years ago, does it exist right now? What may happen the day after tomorrow, is it existentially true? No. So that means, you are suffering that which does not exist. If you are suffering that which does not exist, if you are suffering that which is not in existence, should we call you sane or insane? (...) Your only comfort is: the majority is with you; I have terribly low minority. So it looks like I am talking strange things to you, but it is not so. You can see this.

Therapy is a very limited process, because the nature of life is such that people who are willing to get hurt have every day an unlimited number of opportunities to get hurt: one word or one look may be enough. So they keep on doing therapy. – It helps; you are not free from the problem, but there is a little release. Therapy looks at reducing the pressure; spirituality is looking at the source of the pressure – it's very different. Therapy means, the problem is still there: you're patching it up, isn't it? Therapy helps – when someone is in an extreme situation, some release is necessary; otherwise, he will go burst. But in order to enter the spiritual process, you must be in a certain level of receptivity; you can't go to a sick man and talk to him about liberation.

Your mind must listen to what you say, isn't it? But right now, that's not how you kept it: you're listening to whatever your mind says. This is because you got identified with all that you gathered in your mind; you got identified with the accumulations that you gathered.

If you distance yourself from your mind and your body, all your *karma* is finished. All you need is to be truly willing, which means to have no will of your own.

Karma does not decide what is happening around you; *karma* decides what is happening *within* you. If your *karma* is in a certain way, you will be miserable even if you are living in a palace; if your *karma* is in a different way, then even if you are born in the gutter, you're still joyful – because *karma* is determining your experience of life, not what is happening around you.

In a sense, pleasant *karma* is more dangerous than unpleasant *karma*: if you carry unpleasant *karma*, you want to somehow break it; but if you carry pleasant *karma*, it will take a lifetime to realize that you are captive. (...) If you are seeking liberation, if you are seeking *mukti*, then there is no positive or negative *karma* for you. But if you are seeking well-being, then there is positive and negative *karma* for you. – It depends on what you are seeking.

If you are truly without boundaries, then there is no new *karma* stock for you anymore: the simple process of life itself dissolves the old stock. The *karma* has imprinted itself in many ways – on your mind, emotions, body, energies. You can't lose your *karma* unless you burst the bubble. Now, *karma* is not necessarily a negative factor. Today you are alive only because of your *karma*. *Karma* is the glue which fixes you to the body. If there is no *karma*, then you can't be in the body; you cannot retain the body if you have no *karma* at all – you need *karma*. This is why, 90% of the time, the moment of enlightenment and the moment of leaving your body are the same: when a person reaches enlightenment, he also loses his body. Only those who know the mechanics of the body can hold on to the body; otherwise, people will have to create daily conscious *karma*, or they can't hold on to the body. *Karma* is like a groove, a rut that you formed. The spiritual process allows you to get out of the rut.

When we want to be aware, we want to choose something that is a constant factor, so that you can continuously maintain your awareness.

Doing something with abandon, if you give yourself completely, then, after some time, you are not doing anything – it is just happening by itself. If you give yourself totally to the process, there is a complete abandon. *Abandon* means, you abandon yourself. If you just sit here and do it, it takes enormous awareness to abandon that; but with activity, it is easy to abandon – and there are so many intense activities which you could do with abandon. Because when you do something with total abandon, then what is your past and what is you is completely dislocated: whatever the influence of your past *karma* is not there upon you when you are in an action of total abandon.

What is it that makes every person the way he or she is right now? It's a certain amount of accumulated experience and the conclusions which you have drawn from that experience. Or, a certain amount of unconscious software that you built for yourself, which makes you function in certain types of patterns. These unconscious patterns, you call as "my personality". So this unconscious software, in traditional terms, we call this *karma*. *Karma* means action. There are four kinds of action that you are performing every moment of your life, in wakefulness and in sleep: physical action; mental action; emotional action; energy action – these four levels of activity are happening within you all the time. The residual impact of this activity is called *karma*. This *karma* is today determining what kind of person you are. Once it becomes a pattern, you become a cyclical being. That which is cyclical can only go in circles; it cannot go anywhere. The expression that someone is going in circles essentially means that he is not getting anywhere, isn't it? Once you set a pattern for yourself, you become cyclical; and once you become cyclical, you will not go anywhere. So this pattern forming process is what we are referring to as *karma*. *Karma* means, *my action, my responsibility*: the way I am right now is 100% my making, my doing. Only if you see, "I am 100% responsible for the way I am right now", then you can dream of being something tomorrow. Otherwise, you are just an accidental being, isn't it? If you are not willing to be responsible for what you are right now, can you be responsible for what you may be tomorrow? No. So, once you say, "I am what I am right now because of other people and external events", you're finished, yes? You have forsaken your future even before you live it. You don't have to live it and see; you have already forsaken it, even before it comes, isn't it? If you see that you are responsible, then you suddenly have a right to dream about a tomorrow: "I want it to be this way". If you see, "I am responsible for something", then you will have the ability to respond; if you see "I am responsible for something", then there are any number of things which you can do about any given thing – but if you think, "I am not responsible for it", you will not have the ability to respond. Please see: it is only to the extent that you have taken responsibility in your life that you are free to create it the way you want it; the rest is just happening. Otherwise, you lose your ability to respond. If someone has lost all ability to respond, you say, "he is dead". To be alive means, you have the ability to respond. Now the question is, how alive do you want to be? Your ability to act is always limited, but your ability to respond is always unlimited. Your ability to respond is your ability to be alive; the less you respond, the less alive you become. If you want to be 100% alive, you have to be 100% responsible.

If you pass the buck, it will make its rounds and come back to you. This is known as *karma*. Whatever you give out comes back to you, because this is your making. Whatever is your making invariably comes back to you, because what you do physically, mentally, emotionally, energetically, the residual impact of that is constantly remaining with you; the memory of that on different levels is constantly stored within you – so the impact of the action will naturally come back to you. If you don't want those missiles to come and hit you, the first and foremost thing to do is, you stop the buck. The first thing that you see is, "I am 100% responsible for everything that I am". The moment you decide that you are

not responsible for something, you have decided that you will remain in that situation forever.

Anyone who causes unpleasantness to himself, we cannot call that person an intelligent person. You are destroying yourself by unpleasantness: you're not just having a bad mood; you will also have bad health.

What one breathes out, the other breathes in: we are all responding one to another. Every particle in your body is responding to the whole existence; everything in you is responding in a limitless way – the only thing that is resisting is your mind. Shall we put your mind in alignment with the life within you? Should your mind work for the life within you or against the life within you? Your mind and body are the foot soldiers of your life; they must work for you – but right now, they have started working against you. Your mind is operating with limited responsibility, isn't it? In your life, the moment you limit your ability to respond, you become a disaster.

This is the reason for all your stress: life is compelling you to do a lot of things which you think you are not responsible for, isn't it? If you see, "my responsibility is limitless", then everything that you can do, you will do joyfully; if you see, "my responsibility is limitless", then you will become a willing process of life. But if you think, "I am not responsible", if you fix limitations on your ability to respond, then you will become an unwilling process of life. Whatever may be happening to you right now: if you go through it willingly, that becomes your heaven; if you go through it unwillingly, that becomes your hell. If you fix a limitation on your ability to respond, you are crippled before you live your life, isn't it?

There is a certain aspect of life without which you cannot live; some expression of this needs to happen in your life – this is called love. If there is no expression of love within you, you will very rapidly move either towards insanity, or towards suicide. (...) If you respond a little more openly with one or two people, and close the window for everyone else, then that is not love – that is a love affair. For most people, their love affairs are a joyful process only in the beginning; after that, it is one big anxiety.

Love is not about something; love is not about somebody – it is the way you are. It is the most intelligent way to exist. Many other people can reverberate with it, but it is essentially something that happens within you. If you have become 100% willing to life, love is the way you are; you cannot be any other way.

This life can function only if it is responding limitlessly. This life is functioning as life only because it is responding every moment to everything in the existence; otherwise, it cannot function for a minute. If you are aware of the fundamental nature of life, you will move towards liberation; if you are unaware of it, you will get entangled with the process of life, with the karmic process. This is all the choice you have; you have no other choice.

Unless you loosen the karmic grip, unless you crack the karmic hold upon yourself, no true transformation can happen. Unless you do something consciously, the karmic cycle goes on picking up more and more momentum; and after some time, you will be completely caught up in compulsion. If you know how to celebrate this moment, then your whole life is a celebration; if you do not know how to celebrate this moment, then you will never know celebration.

Whatever there is *right now* is inevitable. The way it is, is the way it is. It is in the lap of this moment that the whole Creation is happening, isn't it? This moment is happening only once in your lifetime. There is no "every moment"; there is only *this moment*. Have you ever experienced anything outside of this moment? This moment is eternity, isn't it? This moment is eternal, inevitable and all-inclusive. If you see this, then there is a natural acceptance of what is there right now, and happiness is the only way you can be. Only a fool will not accept that which is inevitable. Unhappiness is a certain level of unpleasantness which you are forcing upon yourself.

Whatever you accept, that becomes a part of you, that is no more an obstacle in your life; whatever you do not accept, that is a huge burden in your life. By total acceptance, you decide that you intend to live your life peacefully and joyfully. If you are not in a state of acceptance, you will react, and your life turns into a series of reactions, please see. As long as you are reacting to something or somebody, you are enslaved to something or somebody all your life, isn't it? Action is possible in your life only if you are in absolute acceptance of what is there right now; only then you can act – otherwise, you are just one compulsive reaction. When you are in a compulsive state of reaction, you are in a state of enslavement: just about anybody can hijack your life any moment, isn't it so?

If there is suffering in you, this means you are not in touch with Truth; it's as simple as that. This is like a litmus test for you. Do not start a philosophy, "I must accept; I must accept". – If you forcefully try to accept, you will get a lot of pressure. Acceptance is not a trick; acceptance is not a self-help formula. Why do you accept? Because it is the way it is. Acceptance is just *absolute clarity of vision*, seeing everything just the way it is. Only if you perceive things the way they are, you can deal with them in a sensible manner; only Truth works. And if there is no acceptance, everything will get totally distorted according to your thought and your emotion.

"How to accept this? How to accept that?" – You don't have to accept this or that. If you accept the inevitability of this moment, you will accept everything included in this moment. If you try to accept each single "this" or "that", you will get blood pressure.

If you want to know Creation, *this moment* is the doorway. If you want to know the Creator, this moment is the only doorway. If you are not in this moment, you are hallucinating. Right now, existentially you are absent; but psychologically you have become a big deal. Today, everything in the cosmos is happening absolutely beautifully, but you have one nagging thought which is making you miserable, isn't it so? Your psychological reality has become far bigger than the

existential reality. Right now, your petty creation has become far bigger than the Creator's Creation.

To be in the moment is not a choice or a formula – it is the only way existence is happening.

It is only if you accept what is there right now that you can enhance your ability to perceive.

Time and space are the makings of your conscious mind; once you transcend your conscious mind, it gets all mixed up.

How you recognize something depends on your past imprint, and that's your *karma*. So whatever is your past *karma*, that is the way you recognize it: the way you experience everything is your *karma*. It is *your* making; you are making up your experience every moment of your life. Right now, you are making it up in a compulsive way, so it looks like it is happening to you. If you become a little bit more conscious of this process, you can make it happen any way you want to.

The more you are trapped in strong likes and dislikes, attractions and aversions, *karma* is growing at a rapid pace: patterns of bondage are being built within you. But if you maintain an equanimous mind, then *karma* will begin to collapse. And when you are accepting what is there right now, your mind is equanimous – you're neither liking it, nor disliking it: you are experiencing everything just the way it is. As you resist, you are digging your own grave all the time.

Responsibility goes way beyond your present levels of understanding and perception. To what extent you can see life, to that extent you can see: "I am responsible" – then, you will start moving towards liberation. But if you try to pass the buck to somebody, then you will start moving towards entanglement.

Karma is not fatalism; *karma* is completely taking charge of your life, becoming a master of your own destiny. Taking your life where you want to take it, not allowing it to happen accidentally – that's what *karma* means.

In finding access to the Source of Creation within, life becomes magical.

What is the difference between a fact and the Truth? Right now, you are sitting here either as a man or a woman. But how did you come here? Because a man and a woman came together, you are here today, isn't it? So now, you are sitting here as a man – does it mean to say that your mother has made no contribution to you? Does she exist within you? Now, you are sitting here as a woman – does it mean to say that your father has made no contribution to you? Does he exist within you? So the *fact* is, you're either a man or a woman; but the *truth* is, you're both. These are dimensions of life which are very real, but which cannot be expressed logically.

The whole existence is a complex arrangement of sounds.

Eastern traditions took elaborate care that language and culture do not enter the spiritual process, because language and culture keep changing by the generation. But we do not want these influences to distort the spiritual process. For this, we established a certain system called *Guru Shishya Parampara*, which means the *master-disciple traditions*. So as a rule, anything which was spiritual was never written down. Because once scholars get hold of what is written down, Truth is finished: they will interpret it in a hundred different ways. Truth cannot be interpreted; Truth can only be perceived and experienced. If you interpret Truth, it can only be a misinterpretation.

AUM is the most basic sound; this is the universal sound. There is a whole science as to how to utter this sound, how to make use of this sound, because this is the very basis of your physical existence. By using this sound, you can stabilize the physical body and the psychological structure in a huge way. I have seen many people coming out of serious chronic ailments simply by uttering the sound AUM. This uttering of AUM, understanding the science as to how to utter the sound AUM, is called *Aumkar Yoga*. It is a complete system by itself. Here, we use it just as a device to establish a certain pathway to your energy, to establish a certain direction as to how your energies function. The sound AUM has innumerable benefits; even today, if anybody comes here with any kind of psychological disturbances, the first prescription is always AUM: you do this for a few weeks, you settle down, and then we go into other aspects. If you are suffering from an unstable mind or body, if your general constitution is weak, if you have attention disorders, then daily utterance of AUM for a few minutes a day will make an enormous difference for you. If you have problems that you are unable to do anything with a certain resolve in your life, daily utterance of AUM will be truly transformational for you: within a couple of weeks, you can notice a phenomenal difference in the way you function – because this is the basic sound in your physical existence. When you utter this AUM, it is very important that you are aware of the nature of the vibrations that it causes; because any repetition without the necessary awareness will bring dullness into you; repetitiveness will make you dull. Don't mistake dullness for peace – I would rather have you in turmoil and with an active mind rather than you being dull and "peaceful". So, only when you maintain a certain awareness, the uttering of the sound becomes an invigorating process; without awareness, you'll become dull.

The relationship between a form and a sound is known as the science of *mantras*. Every form has a sound attached to it; every sound has a form attached to it. A pure sound is referred to as *mantra*; the corresponding form is the *yantra*. And the technology of using these two things together is called *tantra*. This is a very deep and essential science which requires understanding and commitment, to do it in the right way.

The sound and the reverberation are connected. Forms are converted into sounds (*sanskrit* language): different kinds of forms have been watched and the right kind of names have been given to those forms, so that the form and the name that you utter are connected. So, if you have mastery over the sound that you utter, you also begin to have mastery over the form. This is the science of

mantras. If one moves into a certain state of perception, every form that you see, you can figure out the sound attached to it; and simply by uttering the sound, you connect with the form: you experience the form just by uttering the sound. The core sound for all the phantastic patterns which creation is, is the sound AUM.

Creation has three fundamental aspects: forces of creation (*brahma*), forces of maintenance (*vishnu*), and forces of destruction (*shiva*). To *create*, you need intelligence and knowledge; to *maintain*, you need perseverance; to *destroy*, you need energy.

By persevering, the businessman accumulates money and wealth. You may be brilliant, but if your activity is intermittent, you won't make much money, isn't it?

In your body, the navel (*manipura chakra*) is the maintenance center. All 72.000 channels of *prana (nadis)* meet in the navel and redistribute themselves. The *mantra* for this *chakra* is sound A; the reverberation will start just just $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch below your navel. This is the only sound which takes the reverberation all through the body. If you utter the sound U, the reverberation will begin at the *anahata* and then move upward. This is the creative center, and this is *brahma's* sound. If you utter the sound M, you will see that the reverberation will start at the pit of your throat and generally spread to the upper regions of your body. This is Shiva's sound, *vishuddhi*, which means literally a filter. If your *vishuddhi* is active, you can filter everything that comes to you, and take in only what's needed. Shiva drinks poison and stops it; he doesn't let it affect his system. Poison may be food, or drink, or a wrong talk or a wrong emotion or a wrong idea which might poison your life, completely mess your life up. So if your *vishuddhi* is active, you filter it at the level of your throat, and you can always spit it out. (...) It is beautifully expressed like this: if you have mastery over sound A, you can become extraordinarily rich; if you have mastery over sound U, you can become extraordinarily intelligent; if you have mastery over sound M, you can become extraordinarily powerful. When you utter the sound AUM, you have to ensure that A, U and M are approximately equal – because if you have any one of them in excess, you will become messed up. Too much money, but not the necessary intelligence and power – you will be in trouble; you would be better off without the money. Too much intelligence, without the money nor the power to employ this: again trouble, have you seen this – very intelligent people, a complete mess? Too much power, without the necessary intelligence nor the money – a lot of trouble. These three things must be in balance within you; only then you live a balanced life.

Silence is the basis of all sound. The root for AUM is silence: silence is the most powerful dimension of life. If we don't let you go back to your nothingness, if we don't let you sleep, then in a few days, you will crack up and fall apart. Only if you go back to your nothingness, your somethingness has some substance. If you don't go back to your nothingness, somethingness will just fall apart. And this is not just in terms of wakefulness and sleep: if you bring silence into your life in whichever form you can, you will see what an immense impact it has upon your life. Just keeping silent will make you such a powerful being: in terms of your

intelligence, in terms of your physical strength, in terms of your creativity... – you will see an immense change in the way you exist.

Today, modern education scientists are saying that if a child goes through 20 years of education and comes out with a PHD, 70% of his intelligence is irrevocably destroyed. That means, he comes out as a knowledgeable idiot. So, how to see that education and information does not suppress intelligence? If education happens in story-form, then the suppressive nature of information can be taken away.

Enlightenment means, a conscious annihilation of yourself. For most people, it will take a certain amount of time and maturing to understand that whatever you make yourself to be, in the end, it is frustrating and not enough. However wonderful you make yourself, still it is not enough. Only when you disappear, everything becomes wonderful. (...) When you have lived enough and you know that living better is not going to get you anywhere, then you want to go beyond life.

Isha Yoga is offered in such a way that all dimensions are included, but nothing is compulsive. (...) If somebody were an ascetic and a “full time” *yogi*, I would initiate them in a completely different manner: the way they should go is compulsive.

Get your life to the highest pitch of intensity and involvement, and you’re there. You can do it with anything. (...) You have to rise beyond your ideas of good and bad, like and dislike, and just become intense life – life in its peak performance. (...) If you have gone through the necessary preparation, then just one utterance of a given *mantra* (f.i. “Shiva”) will have you explode to a completely different level of energy and experience; it will explode your shell and deliver you to a completely different dimension.

Physical is exclusive; that which is beyond the physical is all-inclusive. To become spiritual means to cross the limitations of the physical, to become all-inclusive. But unless you stop the judgment, you live in division. According to your intelligence, whatever comes in front of you, you respond to it just as it is needed – not because it’s good; not because it’s bad.

Shiva means, *that which is not*. When we say “that which is not”, we are talking about a dimension which is not physical in nature. If you want to see more than what is needed for our survival process, as perceived by our senses, you need a certain enhancement of perception. The entire yogic system is an enhancement of this perception. When you say *modern science*, you say *physics*: you are only willing to accept the physical as reality. This means that the life that you are is not a reality; only the body is a reality. So we have developed an entire culture based on this. When you say *Shiva*, in a way, you are transcending that limitation. Adiyogi, the first *yogi*, is the one who has grasped that which is not; so we also call him *Shiva*. So, in the popular culture, he is *Shiva*; but in the spiritual culture, he is *Adiyogi* – he is the first *yogi*; that’s why we are interested in him. Because he experienced that which is not, we also call him *Shiva*.

Adiyogi is a reminder that you can be involved with everything in the universe and still be absolutely above it. That's the message he is; that is his message: absolutely engaged in life, but never in it. I don't want you to ever see him as a god; I want you to see him as human being who achieved a state that everybody should aspire for.

No human state which is supposed to make us happy and fulfilled can be maintained for 24 hours a day; it's not possible.

There is actually no need to give up suffering, because it does not exist – unless it is created. You create suffering for yourself because you don't know what you're doing. You suffer because you have become a slave of your mind.

If it was only you who was suffering and nobody else in the world, you would know you are a freako. Now, the problem is, you have too much company, isn't it?

Believing or not believing does not get you anywhere; it just leads to an entertainment.

When you live your life as duty, it is bound to be miserable. When you live like this, you will naturally suffer, and you will ensure that everybody around you suffers.

One who is above his intellect is a *Buddha*; one who is in his intellect is a non-stop suffering human being. Once you're into your intellect, your anxieties and struggles are never gone, please see. It does not matter whether you are a beggar or a king – your struggles are always on, isn't it?

If, by your willpower, you try to forcefully abandon some *karma* pattern, it will simply take on some other form. If the foundations of your karmic structure are loosened, this whole thing will collapse by itself.

If you do not remove the anchor, you cannot go anywhere. What you call as "myself" is the anchor.

If you do not accept the inevitability of this moment, then it hijacks your ability to create.

You need to understand this: suffering is directly proportional to your distance from the Truth of existence. If you are in Truth, there cannot be any suffering; if you are away from Truth, only then there is suffering. And how far away from Truth you are, that's how deep your suffering is.

Wherever you go, the reality of your existence is the same. It does not matter where you are. Social realities will change; surface realities will change. But life realities, the way you are within yourself – this doesn't change, isn't it? The fundamental reality of your existence being a response to the rest of the existence is not going to change; wherever you are, it's the same reality. If you

experience, “this is my responsibility”, you will glide through this world with minimal friction. If you think, “these are not my responsibilities”, every step that you take is going to be very, very abrasive. See, most people, their idea of peacefulness is: just create a small little circle around themselves, don’t be touched by anything, just try to live peacefully within that. This is a fool’s paradise – any moment it can burst open, isn’t it? It can happen at any moment, and when it happens, you will be broken. But if you are in a state of responding in an unlimited way, you will see, no matter what happens to the external situations of our life, we can walk through this gracefully. The process of life, whatever it may be, and the process of death, both we can walk through them gracefully. Otherwise, every step that you take will happen in fear; otherwise, every step that you take is half a step, because you’re always worried about what will happen.

Whatever you react to, you become enslaved to that; whatever you respond to, you become the master of that. Please see that. If somebody else can decide what is happening within you, isn’t that a horrible slavery? If you want to come out of slavery, the first and foremost thing is to see: “the way I am right now is 100% my responsibility” – it does not matter how anybody else is; it does not matter what other people’s intentions are.

This moment is inevitable – you cannot use it; you can only be aware of it. If you are aware of it, you’re liberated; if you’re not aware of it, you are entangled – that’s all it is. If you accept this moment, you’re in your senses; if you do not accept it, you lose all your sense. And that’s all the choice you have: either be sensible, or senseless. It is in the lap of the inevitability of this moment that Creation is happening, isn’t it? If you’re aware of it, you are free; if you are not aware of it, you are entangled – that’s all it is.

Philosophies are phantastic explanations for things that cannot be explained.

All human qualities are in all of us. The so-called good and the so-called evil, the most noble qualities and the most brutish qualities – both can be triggered, conditioned and nurtured in just about every human being. By our very nature, we are all mixed bags.

A joyless face is the worst crime which you could commit on this planet. On this planet, the worst crime is, you walk around with a joyless face. If you are creating an atmosphere of unhappiness, isn’t this the worst crime against humanity?

Unhappy people will protest and start a revolution for petty things which are of no consequence. If tomorrow, they say that you have to drive on the other side of the street, then you go and drive on the other side of the street – what is the problem? Enjoy the excitement of learning to drive in a different way. The same for all other social behaviors expected from you if you want to participate in a common platform. If you’re happy, you’re flexible. If you are unhappy, you are trying to extract your happiness from other people around you, and that’s where conflict starts in human relationships. Responsibility means, you are making your existence here unconditional; then, you act as it is needed for the situation.

The whole journey from misery to blissfulness is just a journey from unconsciousness to consciousness.

Your thoughts are going on non-stop right now. If you're trying to stop it and stop it, you will go crazy. Because in this car, there are no brakes; all three pedals are accelerators: whatever you press, it only goes faster. So, why are these thoughts going like this? You need to understand: the moment you identify yourself with something that you are not, your thoughts are on. The more you identify, the stronger your identification, the more vigorous the thoughts are. It is just like this: you ate bad food; now you have gas. – Can you stop it? – You can't stop it. While eating bad food, you could have stopped; but having eaten bad food, you can't stop the gas, isn't it? – Thoughts are just like that. You have identified yourself with things that you're not; you have gone away from your original nature. You're identified with so many things which you are not, isn't it so? Now you're trying to stop the talk – it is not going to stop. It cannot stop. (...) By taking responsibility for something, you became a somebody. If you see, "I am responsible for everything", you become a nobody. If you don't identify yourself with anything, thought process cannot go on. So, if you don't want gas, you must stop eating bad food; trying to stop gas would be foolish. Bad food is wrong identification. You are not what you accumulate (body, mind, emotions). Your identification is always with that which you have collected, isn't it – people, things, money, diplomas, positions, power, experiences, and so on. Things which are not you, you are experiencing them as yourself – this is wrong identification. If I seriously challenge your thoughts, your convictions, it hurts as much as if I hit you with a stick. You feel insufficient in some way; that's why you are trying to identify yourself with something or the other. There is a sense of insufficiency in your existence: you accumulated knowledge out of insufficiency; you built relationships out of insufficiency; you are working because you are feeling insufficient... – *Your experience of who you are is not sufficient*; that is why all this nonsense is happening. Now, if your experience of who you are is so magnificent and so complete, the need to identify with anything does not arise anymore in your life, isn't it? Once your responsibility is boundless, you cannot identify with anything in particular. All your pains and struggles are coming because you are identified with a few particular things and you are ignoring the rest, isn't it?

From the moment you are born, your identification with the body is so deep that it spreads into all other areas of life (parents, family, social group, country and culture, etc.). It is all based on survival.

The moment you dislike something or someone, all the negative in you starts flowing in that direction. The moment you create like and dislike, you have divided the world. And once you divided the world, inclusion doesn't happen; only exclusion happens – exclusion is the way of the ego. Being exclusive means that you are trying to be special, because right now you are feeling insufficient. You want to paint yourself up in gold right now in order to cover up the insufficiency within you. If you are so ordinary that you have no need to be special, then you are extraordinary.

Opinions are something you created. Your opinions are not really yours; they are largely borrowed from contemporary society. See, your opinions are just picked up from outside, isn't it? If ten people tell you, "you are really beautiful", you think you are really beautiful; if ten people tell you, "you are very ugly", you become very ugly; if ten people tell you, "you are very good", you'll become very good.

Whatever you do, whichever way you do it, you don't do anything other than who you are. You may deceive other people, but within yourself, you know: what you are is what you can do, isn't it? Now, don't worry about what you can do – enhance the way you are, and what you do naturally happens.

The way your mind is functioning right now is, whatever kind of data you have been feeding it until now, it is with that limited data that it is functioning.

Being responsible means responsible to all of life, to all of existence – not only to a small part of it, not only to a limited situation, not to a small group of people and their personal psycho-emotional drama.

Your psychological process is possible only because you feed upon the past and project it upon the future.

You can be in this moment only if you accept the inevitability of this moment, that it is the way it is.

Anything which is not in your living experience, if it is spoken, it is just a story, isn't it? Be honest with yourself: *what I know, I know; what I do not know, I do not know*. Without falsely believing to be knowing, your ego cannot survive. If you don't know, your ego will die. When you truly see, "I don't know a damn thing about myself", then you will become an absolute opening – that is spiritual process. You thinking "I am divine, I am *Atman Paramatman*" is just nonsense that you derived from somebody else. If you experientially become an absolute "I don't know", then you're a realized being – realizing "I do not know" makes you boundless.

Don't try to acquire knowledge about yourself; it's bound to be wrong. You should just acquire the capability to experience yourself the way you are right now. The moment you make mind-conclusions, all possibilities are gone. And the more conclusions we draw, the more we are concretizing our limitations.

Being peaceful and joyful is not something that you have to acquire by coming to an ashram; it is your ultimate nature. (...) Enlightenment is not going somewhere; enlightenment is just a homecoming, just falling back into original nature.

Morality can be a control on a certain group of people for a certain period of time, but it's not a solution for the nonsense that is going on, isn't it? Only when people are rooted in their original nature, there is a solution; otherwise, everything is just a patch-up.

If you do not have a philosophy, if you do not have a story, if you do not have beliefs, then you cannot sustain your nonsense, please see. And the moment you have a philosophy, you do not have to use your intelligence from moment to moment, isn't it? You have to shift your intelligence from just thinking to looking and seeing. This has to happen. All the practices we are doing are towards this direction. And you have to support it intellectually also; you have to see to it that your intelligence does not become a thinking process, but a looking process, capable of seeing everything just the way it is – otherwise, you will just shift into another kind of belief system. *Jnana* means, not believing anything, just making your mind razor sharp – making it so sharp that it cuts through everything and simply sees everything the way it is. *Jnana* means, making your mind into pure perception – not thought, not conclusion, but simply seeing. Whatever conclusions you make about life are bound to be wrong, isn't it so?

You have become a slave of your own mind: you are not handling your mind; your mind is handling you, isn't it? You are not using your mind; mind is using you up – the roles got reversed. Mind means, you can make your life wonderful, and you can make everybody's life wonderful. But now, you are making a torture out of it.

You need to understand, everything happens without you.

Whatever kind of personality you have, you are a friction, isn't it? Your personality is just an unconscious product of all the things which you have accumulated in your life: this is not carefully crafted; this is an unconscious product. Why are you attaching so much importance to it? You are extending the ways of the body to other dimensions of life; that's why the whole problem.

If you are in deep acceptance with everything which is there right now, then there is no friction with anything in the existence – you go through life perfectly lubricated.

This moment is not a certain piece of time; this moment is not a calculation of time – this moment is eternity. Everything happens *now*, isn't it so? You cannot catch it – you have to relax into it; you have to merge with it. – That's the only way.

There are some dimensions to which you cannot find access if you are wearing your logical boots all the time. But since you cannot take them off, I am trying to walk you around slowly. Until you realize the limitations of your logic, you will not drop it.

Whatever you think about yourself right now, whatever you think other people may think of you, all of this does not matter a damn thing existentially. Spiritual process means, you want to progress on the existential level; you want to go somewhere really. Because your emotion, your psychology, your society – it's all just your imagination.

True freedom is when you cease to exist; true freedom means, to be free from yourself, to be free from existence itself; that is breaking the bubble completely. The dropping of the physical dimensions will not happen until you make a serious conscious effort. That is what is referred to as *spiritual process*, that you realize the limitation. Once you see that you are doing the same stupid things over and over again, you will say: “what’s the nonsense?” – Right now, you’re too fascinated with your life drama.

Belief is a comfort seeking. Somebody is telling a large story: “let me see”. If you keep the “let me see” open, you’re in possibility. (...) Just work on the boundaries, on the limitations, on the ropes which tie you down. Let’s see where this takes you. Don’t listen to anybody’s stories.

You never look at or think of anybody else’s *karma* or bondage. The moment you look at it, you make it yours. You look at your *karma* and see what you can do about it.

Either as an individual or as a whole society, you definitely head for a disaster if you are running on too many assumptions, isn’t it so? Leave aside your assumptions. You can only start your journey from the place which is experientially true for you. Then, you chart out one more step, according to your understanding. If it works, we will talk about the next step.

If you had a very simple childlike mind, your assumption would be all that you have, and you would become a devotee. But now, you have a more complex intellect; it doesn’t accept any assumption totally. Once your intellect has evolved, you cannot follow anybody totally – you can only follow to a point of convenience. Even when Jesus said, “come follow me”, the scholars in the society, the educated, the sophisticated, did not follow him – only the fishermen, the farmers, the peasants followed him, the simple folk. People like you cannot follow anybody. So you take one step at a time; then, you clear the next step with lots of understanding; then, you take one more step. If it is working, then you will start taking steps a little more rapidly after a certain time.

In the lowest level of the mind, first we do something; then, we keep accountability. Never do something as a service to anybody; there is no service you can render to anybody. When you have love in your heart and you get an opportunity to do something, you must be extremely grateful that you got the privilege to do it. If this is not so, please don’t do it. If you are going to do something and keep accounts, you will sink into the lowermost depths.

The nature of your mind is such that whenever you say, “I don’t want this”, only that will happen.

The moment you perceive everything through the five sense organs, the world gets divided. And only when there is a division, there is logic. If there is only one, there is no logic; only if there are two, there is logic. So the foundation of the logical mind is in dividing the world. And if you do not divide existence, you cannot employ your logic. So sense perception and logical thinking, or logical

understanding, are directly connected; they are complementary to each other. Now, what cannot be contained in logic, or what cannot be perceived by the sense perceptions, this is what we are referring to as *mystical*. The dimension of truth which cannot be boxed into your logical mind is being labeled *mystical*.

This world has seen many beings with heightened levels of perception, but the one that we can call *Ultimate Perception* is Shiva himself. (...) Shiva is seen as the *Adiyogi*, or the first *yogi*, and the *Adi Guru*, the first *guru*. (...) His perception has gone beyond the five sense perceptions. What these two eyes cannot see, he is able to see.

They have been promising us for a long time, in every culture, that they are going to take us to heaven. They promise heaven because they are making a hell out of this place.

The only thing that you have in your experience is what is called *you*. You can experience this being. (...) Something within you is creating you, isn't it? Or in other words, the source of creation seems to be functioning from right within you. So, if you really want to know reality, you must see how to turn your attention inward. (...) If this experience comes into the grasp of a human being, then everything about him will change.

Mysticism is like pure science; it has no use; mysticism is just the human longing to know. (...) Occult is not science; occult is just technology. (...) If you focus your mind on something, and if you are also able to channel a little bit of your energy behind it, it is bound to happen – that is, if your energies are fluid enough. Or it may be done using a certain ritual or process to get yourself into the state. So, backing up your mind with energy is occult. This is a simplistic explanation for the occult sciences. (...) It is just physical technology on a different level, that's all; you are just using your body and mind and energy to do these things. (...) If your thought and emotion is kept in a certain way, then slowly your energies will join; now this becomes a powerful tool. But it is on a surface level. It will create the right ambience, but it will never fix the problem as such; it cannot. It can open the door, but it is not the real thing. (...) So, empowering your thought can produce certain results for now: you can improve your career; you can improve your income; you can improve your relationships... – but all these are extremely superficial aspects of your life.

Occult could be used as a stepping stone to a spiritual process, because in many ways, it is the final step of physicality: the subtlest point of physicality is what we are using in occult. (...) Occult is using the subtlest phenomenon of the physical. Because it is the last step in physicality, it can also be used as a stepping stone to go beyond the physical. So in that sense, it is significant; but by itself, it is not.

A *gnana yogi* means someone who uses his intellect to start with and then moves on to using his intelligence.

If you are connected with your consciousness, then the mind is just free.

In *yoga*, we have divided the different faculties of this dimension that you are referring to as *mind* in different ways: *chitta*, *manas* and *sakshi*. *Chitta* is the discriminative reason. (...) The discriminatory nature of the mind is just an inner extension of the sense perception, a receptive point for all the senses. (...) *Manas* is another part of the mind which can function even when your sense organs are asleep. This dimension is active in your dream states. (...) This *manas* came as an empty space. Now whatever you gathered in your *chitta*, all the information that you gathered in the *chitta*, is reflected in the *manas*. Now, how it reflects depends on how you keep your *manas*. If your *manas* is perfectly still, then it gives you a proper reflection of whatever you have gathered. If your *manas* is wavy, it gives you a distorted vision of everything. This is the reason why each person perceives the same situation in many, many different ways. (...) Beyond this is a dimension called *sakshi*. *Sakshi* is just witnessing. (...) That means you witness everything, but you are not a part of it. So, the many spiritual methods and processes that are being employed around the world in the form of meditation, prayer, etc., are to somehow bring some sense of witnessing in you.

Whatever is in your hands, you keep that in perfect condition; then, what is beyond you will anyway happen. (...) Don't worry about God. He has to come to you.

The spiritual process is not about being ethical or moral, good or bad; it is just looking for ways to break the limitations in which we exist.

The bondage of life is through the five elements; and the possibility of life is also through the five elements. The fundamental ingredient of human life is freedom. So the spiritual process only thinks of liberation, not of mastery.

The problem is, we play every game halfheartedly. If you play any one game totally, you will break the limitations of your existence.

If you remember past lives and you are in this state that, "this is mine; that is not mine", then you are going to get into lots of trouble. Too much trouble; more than you can handle. If you have reached a point where everything is yours or nothing is yours, then it is okay to remember – then, it would be useful to remember.

If a child begins to taste dimensions beyond the physical, then he will have no will to retain the body; the physical body will have no will to sustain itself. Mentally also, this is true, but physically, it is even more so – it will quit. Child *yogis* never live long. If they survive beyond fifteen years of age, they will pass usually by the time they are twenty-one to twenty-three years old. If they attain when they are a little older, just in the pre-puberty age – let us say between ten to thirteen years – then, generally by the time they are somewhere between thirty-one to thirty-four, most of them will pass. (...) If the body becomes aware before it is established in a certain way, it cannot sustain itself beyond a point. (...) They did more in that short span of life than most people will do in ten lifetimes, even in terms of physical activity.

Imagination is firmly rooted in your mind. You must understand this: it does not matter how fanciful or how wild your imagination is, still it is very firmly rooted in your past experience of life. (...) the mind is capable of creating any number of lifetimes with vivid details, but that is of no significance. (...) Imagination is only to enhance the power of the mind. For people who come from tantric backgrounds, imagination is a powerful tool. (...) the tantric process is a very highly and vividly imaginative process. But this is all to acquire a certain mastery and power over certain aspects of life and nature; it is not for somebody who is seeking liberation.

If you are using any faculty of the mind, the question of delving into the unconscious nature of the mind does not arise. This must be understood: the mind has no tools to enter the unconscious dimensions. Only if you are *outside* of the mind, you can look at everything the way it is; when you are *in* the mind, there is no way to dissect yourself.

The consciousness of a devotee is so crystallized that the distinction between what is reality and what is not reality is obliterated. (...) Because his consciousness is so crystallized, he has become the creator: he believes in a certain form, and that form just arises before him. This is not imagination anymore – this is creation; (...) this is a different state of being. (...) Once logic is active, it keeps on separating; there is no question of merging.

Existing without the necessary awareness to know the nature of your own life is called *dreaming*. Your very thought process is called a *dream*: if you do not exist in reality, you are in a dream. Everything that is happening within the scope of your psychological framework is actually a dream. *Dream* means: that which is not existentially there, but which still feels real to you. Anything that is in your experience feels as real, or more real than reality; but since it has no existential basis, it is called a dream. So, every thought that you generate is actually a dream; every emotion that you generate is actually a dream – or, in that context, the whole experience of your life, in a certain way, is a dream... (...) If you can simply *be* and cut through your psychological process and touch another dimension of life, then you are not dreaming – otherwise, you are having a dream. (...) Dreams often have more power than reality in most people's lives. That is because most people have never really touched reality as such. (...) As a *guru*, I would just brush all the dreams aside as one pile of rubbish. (...) The whole purpose of *yoga* is to work towards a state of dreamlessness called *sushupti*. *Sushupti* means, you are dreamless; you are so aware that you are incapable of dreaming.

Almost 100% of your dreams do not mean anything; they are just an expression, an outlet for all the unfulfilled desires you have suppressed within you. When I say unfulfilled desires, I want you to understand: most of the desiring, you are not even conscious of it. (...) Generally, you are only aware of desire on the level of your mind and imagination – also on the level of your body, to some extent. You are not aware of other desires because this whole process of so-called civilization, or culture, or etiquette, is just glossing over all these things, just suppressing all these unconscious desiring processes.

Lucid dreams means, you are a good dreamer; *lucid dreams* means, you have a continuous cinema.

About the *first set of dreams*, they are just unfulfilled desires. (...) The *second type of dream* gives you certain indications of things that could be happening with your body, with your mind and with your immediate life situations – in an oblique way, usually. (...) The *third category of dreaming* has something to do with the karmic structure. Depending upon the body of *karma* that you carry with you, accordingly it reflects upon the mind. (...) The *fourth type of dreaming* is not really a dream, but it falls into the category of dreams. We could call it *crystallization*. It means, crystallizing something that you hold in your mind, or projecting your mind so powerfully that it becomes a reality, a living reality, where something or someone actually becomes physically present. (...) As for the *fifth* – I have no logical means to express that. Let us leave that alone.

Devotion means, going absolutely crazy with your emotions. When you become a devotee, the emotional part of the mind is fired up beyond its normal limits. That is why devotion has been such a powerful way to the Divine. If you just go a little crazy and come down, that is not devotion. But just going all out, totally crazy, is something else. (...) Devotion is always the quickest way to grow. (...) But the path of devotion is only possible for very simple, innocent minds. Doubting minds, thinking minds, suspicious minds, should not pretend devotion – it does not work. You must wait to get the complex portions of your mind beaten down by life. (...) Life will beat your mind slowly, very slowly. You will see: you had many ideals – slowly, life beats them down, isn't it? One by one, they are beaten down. If you are intelligent, you can sit here, and you can beat all of it down *right now*. Now, when devotion has come as an inner experience, it just bursts forth out of you; you cannot help it. When devotion happens like this, then it transports you from this end to that end very quickly; it is the quickest vehicle to transport you.

If the action sinks deeper than the four dimensions (physical, mental, emotional and energy), then we call it *kriya*. (...) *Kriya* is a type of action which imprints itself on a completely different dimension and begins to dismantle the karmic impact or the karmic residue that has been accumulated in the system. (...) Your body's memory goes way beyond your present levels of understanding. It transcends human form, and even animal nature; it goes right back to the basic elements. (...) You cleanse these five elements of all memory of your father, of your mother, of your grandparents, of your forefathers, and of the so-called animal. You erase this memory, so that you are your own possibility. It is from this understanding that, when somebody takes to the spiritual path with any seriousness, when somebody gets initiated into *brahmacharya* or *sanyas*, they do *death karma*: "I am taking my destiny into my own hands. It does not matter how entangled every other form was, whose memory I am in the form of this body – I am taking the needed steps to walk away from this memory; I am walking away from this bondage to craft my own journey towards my liberation."

Whether activity is entangling or whether activity is a process of liberation essentially depends on one's level of *sadhana*, and also on the attitude and the volition with which the action is done. If people try to do *sadhana* without performing the needed activity in their lives, *sadhana* will be a great struggle. Suppose you come here and I tell you, "You don't need to do anything. Just sit, we will take care of you. Twelve hours a day, just sit and meditate." – Initially, it may look like a great fortune; but after a month's time, you will be going nuts. If you cross that madness, you will cross everything. But most people give up when the madness arises within them. (...) All of the internal voices will scream to find expression; they won't keep quiet. Millions of lives will scream from within: they want to have their say; they want to live through you – they won't let you go free just like that. (...) One way to deal with them is to obliterate them (which is a hard path, which needs a lot more *sadhana*); another way is to distance yourself from them: let them scream; you put on your earplugs and you are not bothered. These are the two different ways. But you cannot ignore them, because they throb in every cell of your body.

We set up a *dream machine*, or a *dream yantra*, to hasten the process of dreaming.

Many *yogis* choose to leave their bodies on a given day, at a given time. They don't die; they leave. (...) Just like you take off your clothes and throw them away, in the same manner, you shed your body and go. If you understand where you and your body are linked, you can break the link when you wish. (...) If you know this, the point of this coupling, you can release it – gently. Nobody has to forcefully evict you. You are not waiting for eviction; you are a graceful person – when the time is up, you go.

Why would anyone want to end the game? *Because they have seen enough.* (...) For you, your memory is blocked; for you, the memory is only from birth to now. So you think, "Why should I stop the game?" – But suppose you realize that you have done this a hundred times over: if you saw everything clearly, it would not make any sense to you to go through the same nonsense once again; you would naturally want to see what is next. When someone leaves his body consciously, he is truly no more. That is referred to as *mukti* or liberation: the game is up.

Seeking is not something we invented. *It is the nature of human intelligence to want to know, realize, and liberate itself.* (...) As a seeker, you are not aligned to a particular thing on the outside, but to the life process within you, and that never goes wrong.

The needs within a human being have arisen because of a certain sense of incompleteness. People are forming relationships to experience a certain sense of completeness within themselves. (...) There are expectations, and expectations, and expectations. The expectations that most people are creating are such that there is no human being on the planet who could ever fulfill those expectations. (...) These expectations keep changing in people; they are not consistent, and they cannot be – (...) now, relationships become a great conflict.

Shifting your life from pursuit of happiness to an expression of joyfulness is what needs to happen if relationships really have to work on all levels. (...) If your body goes in search of a relationship, we call this *sexuality*. If your mind goes in search of relationships, we call this *companionship*. If your emotion goes in search of relationships, we call this *love*. If your energies go in search of relationship, we call this *yoga*. All these efforts are just an attempt to become one with something else, isn't it? (...) Because somehow, just being who you are is not enough.

What is not in your experience is not a reality for you, isn't it?

Head, heart, hands, and energy – these are the only four realities. If you want to get somewhere, all these four aspects have to function together; only then you get somewhere. (...) Enhance who you are on all four levels. (...) Nurture the root; it is the root that you need to focus on. (...) *Yoga* is the science and technology of nourishing the roots of your existence, so that everything else naturally flowers. Just because you want a flower, a flower will not come. You have to do the right things, only then it happens, isn't it? That is so with everything in your life.

As much pleasantness as possible within you and around you, the maximum level of pleasantness possible in your body, mind, emotions and energy – this is what you want. (...) In body, if you become pleasant, we call this *health and pleasure*. In mind, if you become pleasant, we call this *peace and joyfulness*. In emotion, if you become pleasant, we call this *love and compassion*. In your energies, if you become pleasant, we call this *blissfulness and ecstasy*.

The moment you identify yourself with something limited, you are in a natural conflict with the rest of the existence; you cannot help it. The moment there is a limited identification, there is a conflict – when it will become violent is just a question of situations.

If, for at least a moment, you have experienced something that you think is worthwhile, then you must pitch your life for it.

Your very existence here is karmic. When we say *karma* – the word *karma* literally means *action*; we are talking about *your action*. When it comes to action, you can perform action in four different ways. You can do *physical action* with your body; you can do *mental action*, *emotional action* and *energy action*. In all these four levels, action is constantly happening. Some of it you are consciously doing; a large part of it is unconsciously happening, isn't it? Every action that you perform in these four dimensions, the imprint of this action is always left within you as a residue. So these imprints gather over a period of time and they develop their own tendencies. (...) Whichever way your *karma* is, that is the kind of person you are right now: your *karma* is deciding the very way you think, feel, understand and experience your life right now. *Karma* means, it is a software that you wrote for yourself unconsciously. Depending upon the type of actions that you perform in your mind, in your emotion, in your body and in your energy, accordingly you write your software. Whichever kind of software you wrote,

now after some time, that is how this whole mechanism functions. Once you write a certain type of software, now this whole system functions only that way, isn't it?

The software is not written by some other dimension or force; it is written by you – but because you did most of it unconsciously, you cannot believe you did it. You went up a mountain, and as you were walking down, you just dislodged one small pebble. This pebble rolled down and slowly became a huge avalanche and wiped out a whole village. Now you cannot believe you did it, isn't it? You cannot believe you did it, because you just dislodged a single pebble – but it has picked up momentum. (...) You are happening as a compulsive being, not as a conscious being – that is the basis of all unpleasantness in a human being.

Karma is deciding not about what happens; *karma* is deciding how you experience your life. The quality of your life is always decided by how you experience, not by what you have around you.

Your destiny is written by you unconsciously. See, if you have mastery over your physical body, 15-20% of your life will be in your hands. If you have mastery over your mind, 50-60% of your life and destiny will be in your hands. If you have mastery over your life energies, 100% of your life and destiny will be in your hands. How much out of control you are, that is how much you talk about destiny.

You are too full of yourself. If you know how to keep yourself aside, this is what we are referring to as *surrender*. (...) You just keep yourself aside; you learn to keep yourself aside. If you know how to keep yourself aside completely, then suddenly, a totally different dimension starts functioning within you. (...) The ultimate surrender is non-identification.

"I do not know" is a tremendous possibility; "I do not know" is the basis of all knowing in the existence. If you destroy "I do not know" with conclusions and beliefs and whatever else, you destroy all possibility of knowing. If you believe something, you will not get anywhere; if you disbelieve it, you will not get anywhere – all you will have is a conclusion to talk about. It will solace you for today, but it will not lead you to liberation; it will not lead you forward one inch, existentially.

To have the awareness that we are only moving from one form of ignorance to another, this is the greatest blessing that one can start with right now.

From an unwavering, steady mind comes liberation in this life. It is not about what you are doing; it is just that you are doing it in an unwavering way: you are just *unwavering*; you have become *one-pointed*.

Your compulsiveness has essentially come as a consequence of the huge accumulation that you have made within yourself. This accumulation has happened because you have the illusion that you are perceiving something. You are actually not perceiving anything. (...) *You are an illusion yourself; you are a make-believe happening.* – But you do not know; you just think you are something.

Whatever is happening within you, it does not matter; whatever is happening within you, you just keep your steering wheel straight; you just keep your direction straight. Whatever illusion is happening, you just keep your foot on the gas pedal – you just gas your way through all that; it does not matter. As long as you are travelling straight, you just keep the throttle down. Don't go off the gas pedal, just keep it down and down and down – that is all; that is your business: your business is to put the foot down all the time.

There is nobody who is not aware; it is just that most people have not empowered their awareness. They have empowered something else; so accordingly, life is happening.

Everything you are right now is just a memory. Both memory and imagination have no existential relevance; they are not true.

You must understand this: whatever you believe becomes your reality.

Surrender is a certain realization that in your present form, you cannot pass the gate. This realization comes either out of your intelligence, or because life has been grinding you sufficiently, or because you are insane enough to fall in love in an unbridled way – not in a conditional way, not in a sensible way, not in a nice way, but in an insane way.

Wherever there was genuine spiritual process, uncannily you will see: they generally developed the same kinds of cultures.

Unless a person exercises a certain level of awareness and intellect, he will function only by his tendencies.

If you can manage to move from your wakefulness to sleep in awareness, this last moment of passing from life to death will happen absolutely gracefully for you. (...) You just practice this tonight: the last moment of passing from wakefulness to sleep, that last moment, maintain your awareness. Only when you lose your awareness will you fall asleep. Just use this as a method every day. With total perseverance you go at it, and you will see, in a few days you will get there, where at the final moment you are aware.

What I have seen is: most people die with a sense of being lost, in disappointment or fear. Even those people who seem to die peacefully, they die in disappointment and frustration: there is a sense of being bewildered and deceived by life; that is what you will see at the moment of death. It is my wish and my blessing that this should not happen to you. When you die, you must die

joyously with a huge smile on your face. (...) If you do not learn how to transcend your limitations when you are alive, the possibility of you dying joyously does not arise at all. So when we say a spiritual process, we are not just helping people to live well; we also help people to die well.

People on the spiritual path shed their body consciously when the body is in full health. People on the spiritual path decide when to leave; and when their body is in full health, they leave it. They have known something other than the physical, so for them, dropping the physical is not a big issue.

When one leaves the body, for whatever reason, the fundamental reason is that the physical body has become unsuitable to sustain and nourish life. When this happens, what will happen to that being? The physical body and the conscious mind goes – the discretionary aspect of his mind is gone, but the content of his mind is not gone. He still has the qualities, but he has no discrimination. So now, once the discretionary mind is gone, he will only proceed according to his tendencies.

It is truly wise for a person to choose a space which is spiritually conducive, which is vibrant in a certain way, and he leaves there with as much grace as possible. If you have lived with grace, it becomes extremely important that you die with grace.

If your energy becomes full force, if you desire for *everything*, this is meditation. A feeble life cannot meditate – (...) if it has to become a roaring piece of life; its desire should be limitless. (...) If you are on a spiritual path, there is no such thing as contentment; greed is the rule. A human being should seek nothing less than everything. And when he seeks everything, small things will not keep his attention.

Consciousness just means that your experience of life is not limited to the physicality. Spirituality means essentially, to take your experience of life beyond the physical process.

Desires are made-up stuff. With made-up stuff, you can play a little bit; but if you make that your life, you are definitely heading for a disaster.

What comes into the sphere of your desire is simply what you are exposed to.

If you make your desire contentless, simply one big longing, then you will see, life will happen miraculously.

To be intense, you do not have to do anything, actually. I am sitting here right now with a great sense of intensity. You will never see me not being intense. My relaxation is also intense; my activity is also very intense; my sleep is also very intense – I do not do anything without intensity, because life is intensity. If you lose the intensity of life, you are dead.

Because you do not know intensity to propel yourself into action, you create tension; because you create tension, you seek laxity – both are not okay. If you are intense, you can effortlessly do everything that you wish. Intensity is the way of life.

The mind can be changed, and you must remain capable of changing it. If you become identified with it, then you lose your freedom. The greatest freedom is to be free of one's own mind. (...) So break the identification; remember that you are not the mind. (...) So, the first thing is to *create a distance*.

You can never decide from the outside whether someone has achieved the cosmic sound AUM. The deeper you go, the more private is the happening. (...) Of course, many things which can be known from the outside will begin to happen through the person who has reached – but still: the feeling that he has reached the cosmic ground will just be an inference, an inference from his behavior.

How can you find the center? The center can only come to you. So, the seeker going towards God – it is always a false relationship. The real relationship is completely different: it is God coming to the seeker. When you are ready, He comes. When you are open, He becomes the guest. When your invitation is valid, total, He is there.

When a religion dies, it becomes a ritual: the dead body of a religion becomes a ritual. (...) The belief that something done outwardly can create an inward revolution creates rituals.

Whenever there is inward revolution, whenever there is inner mutation, whenever there is some inner transformation, it is followed by many outward things and signs – it is bound to be so, because the inward exists in relation to the outward. Nothing can happen inside which will not affect the outside also. (...) If the inner is there, the outer will follow – but the vice versa is not true.

This is the mathematics of inner workings: desire creates misery. If desire fails, it necessarily creates misery. But even if desire succeeds, it again creates misery – because the moment you succeed, your desire has gone ahead; it is asking for more. Really, the desire is always ahead of you: wherever you reach, it will be ahead of you. And you will never reach the point where you and your desire can meet; that is impossible. (...) wherever you are, you will be in the present, and desire will be in the future. (...) The distance remains always the same, really. (...) Desire is just like the horizon: you may go around the whole earth and come back to your home, never meeting the horizon anywhere, but the illusion can continue. (...) Has any desire been fulfilled, ever? Don't ask others; ask yourself. (...) The future obsesses us; the eyes are always fixed on the far-off horizon, and this fixation with the horizon is the cause of all actions. The hurry is such, and life is so short, and one has to run and go on running! Have you achieved anything through any desire, or does frustration always come? Aren't ashes always in the hand, and nothing else?

An old man is always burdened: there is a past, a long past – so many dead desires, so many frustrations, so many horizons never found, so many rainbows just broken. An old man is always thinking about the past, remembering, going again and again into the memory. An old man, by and by, begins to forget the future – because now, the future only means death, and nothing else.

The mind moves; it goes on moving: in children, it has a vast expanse to move; with an old mind, it has no expanse to move further. But this is the movement of the mind, not of time. Really, we think that time is moving. No, *we* are moving! We just go on moving; time is not moving at all. It has always been *here and now*; and it will always be *here and now*. (...) For us, time is just a passage to move from one desire to another. If desires cease, then your movement will cease. And if your movement ceases, you will meet with time *here and now*. And that meeting is the door; that meeting is the invocation.

Unless you cease the craving to get, you will never be mature. (...) Understand this: what have you got through this eternal getting? Where have you reached? What have you found? What is there which you can say is the achievement of this constant, mad getting? Nothing! You are as poor as ever, as much a beggar as ever – rather, more. And the more you become a greater beggar, the more is the desire to get. If you understand this, then the very understanding becomes a transformation: the getting drops. And the moment the getting drops, a new dimension opens: you begin to give.

The understanding of desire becomes desirelessness; the knowing of desire is the cessation of desire. So know deeply; understand deeply – don't take any hurried step. Be pure, and the Divine will be invoked. To be desireless, pure, is to have a deep understanding of the futility of all that we have been doing, of all that we are. The moment this purity is there, invocation happens. Then, in the very deepest core of existence, you have called: you have asked and invited; your invitation has penetrated.

Mind goes on repeating; it is a mechanical thing. And the past has been repeated so many times that to repeat it has become easy and automatic. (...) Mind is just a dead, mechanical thing – the dynamism is in your consciousness; and if your consciousness is identified with the mind, then the dead mind becomes dynamic. The dynamism belongs to your energy; it is not part of your mind. If you are identified with the mind, if you think that you are the mind, then the mind begins to be dynamic. You give the energy, and the dead machine begins to move – *you* pedal it. If you are not identified with the mind, then the mind is just dead – just a dead weight, just a mechanical accumulation.

The mind is a long accumulation – millennia of evolution are accumulated there; many, many lives are accumulated there. It is not only that your mind belongs to *this* life (i.e. your life specifically) – it belongs to life *as such*. It has evolved, so it has deep grooves. It is not only that you fall in love: your father and mother have fallen in love before you; their fathers and their mothers and theirs and theirs – they all have fallen in love. The mind has a deep groove of falling in love; so when you fall in love, don't be deceived that *you* are falling in love: the whole humanity

is behind you; the whole humanity has made the groove. It is in your bones; it is in your very metabolism; it is in your cells: every cell has long memories, beginningless memories.

So the first thing is how *not to identify*, how to remember *constantly* that the mind is one thing and you are something else. It is difficult; it is arduous – but it is possible. And once, if you have even a moment's glimpse of unidentified existence, then you will never be the same again. (...) if even for a single moment, you have the glimpse of your mastery, then mind will never be master again. And only then can you move into the unknown.

It seems that mind forces you – it doesn't force you really; it only gives you the easiest grooves. It supplies to you only the repeated routine tracks, and you fall victim to convenience – because to break a new route and to create a new track and to move in a new groove is very difficult and inconvenient. That is what is meant by *tapas* – austerities. If you begin to move in some new grooves which are created not by the mind, but by consciousness, then you are in *tapascharya* – in austerity.

Don't cooperate; don't be identified. The mind goes on and on, and waits for you to come and cooperate – there will be every temptation. (...) Convenience is the temptation; convenience is the devil. (...) The situation is there, and the mechanism is just on. Always, whenever this situation was there, you have been angry, so the mind supplies you again with the same reaction. (...) If you don't cooperate, the mind falls dead, because it is your cooperation which gives it dynamism, energy.

Energy means movement, so it moves. If mind supplies it with grooves, then it moves into the grooves. If there is no supply of grooves and if you have put off the mind, then too it moves, but now the movement is into the uncharted.

There are not so many desires: really, there are very few; and you go on repeating them. (...) Because of the past, the future is just a repetition – it is the projected past.

The body has a momentum. If you are running and want to stop suddenly, you cannot stop. (...) *You* have decided to stop; *your mind* has stopped – but still, your body will have to run a little more because of your momentum. You have been pedaling a bicycle, and now you have stopped pedaling, but the wheels have accumulated momentum. They will run on, and it will take a little more time for the bicycle to stop completely. That's why I always say that if the bicycle is going uphill, then it will stop soon. If you have stopped pedaling and the bicycle is going uphill, then it will stop soon – it may even stop the same moment you stop pedaling. But if it is going downhill, it may go on much longer... So, if enlightenment happens before the age of thirty-five, the body may die soon; if it happens after thirty-five, then it is downhill, and it may continue more. (...) With desires stopping totally, really you have stopped being a body. Now, the old momentum will work, and it will depend on many things. (...) If you don't have any lust for life, then even medicines may not prove helpful at all.

Body and consciousness are related by desires. That's why, if a person dies without desire, then he will not be reborn – because now, there is no necessity, no causality to create a body again.

The life we know is desire – but there is another life which is desireless. (...) This life is through body; that life is through pure consciousness.

By dropping desires and actions, energy will be accumulated – and now, energy will begin to move. When it moves, how it moves, will vary from individual to individual – but now, it will move. There will be a gap, an interim period, an interval – this I call *a pregnancy period*. The seed is born, but now it will gestate for at least nine months: you will just become inactive. This inactivity will also vary. Someone may become so inactive that people may think that he has just gone into a coma. Everything stops. Then suddenly, a different man is born. The man who became inactive is no more; a new energy has accumulated. Then, energy will begin to move without desires. (...) Inactivity is bound to be there – more or less, but it will be there; a period of inactivity will be there. And only then can you be reborn, because the whole mechanism has to change completely. The mind drops, old roots drop, the old habits drop, the old associations of consciousness and desires, consciousness and mind, drop – everything old drops, and everything has to be new.

Non-wavering knowing is *asana*, the posture. (...) If the mind becomes still, then the body becomes still. And if your mind is not still, the body will be wavering. (...) If your mind is totally still, then even if you are dancing, you will feel from inside that the body is still. A Buddha is still even when he is dancing; a non-Buddha is not still even when he is dead. (...) The vibrations come from your center – they originate from you; and then, they spread towards the body. The body is not the originator; it is not the source – so you cannot stop the vibrations from the periphery. You can impose; you can practice – but inside, there will be turmoil; and this imposing will create more conflict than stillness. (...) From the center, the waves must not come.

Your mind is flooded: first, with *outward reactions and reflections* which are natural; second, by *subconscious thoughts* which have been produced by the society; and third, by *instinctive nature* which has been suppressed totally. And because of these, you are constantly wavering and trembling. You cannot even sleep: dreams will continue; that means, mind will continue wavering. Twenty-four hours a day, the mind is just a mad thing going round and round and round.

Every society is totalitarian, and every society takes your mind in such a way that you become just an automaton – and you go on thinking and deceiving yourself that your thoughts are yours. They are not! Even the very language we use is contaminated; the words we use are contaminated. Even the words we use are loaded with the subconscious; we cannot use a single word without the subconscious being there. The subconscious mind is constantly working, day and night.

Your deepest part is that which you are born with, the biological instinctive nature. The subconscious mind is controlling outward behavior and also inward instincts. Nothing should be allowed to come up to the conscious mind from your instinctive, unconscious nature if the society is against it; so this subconscious creates a great barrier for the instinctive nature. For example, sex is an instinct, the deepest, because without it, life cannot exist on earth. So life depends on sex. It is not easily dispensable, obviously; it must not be – otherwise, life will become just impossible. So, the sex instinct has a deep grip. But the society is anti-sex; it is bound to be. The more a society is organized, the more it will be anti-sex – because if your sex instinct can be controlled; then everything can be controlled, and if your sex instinct cannot be controlled, then nothing can be controlled. So it becomes a fighting ground. You must be aware that whenever a society becomes sexually free, then that society cannot exist – it is defeated. (...) The moment a society becomes sexually free, the individual is not in its grip; you cannot force him.

It is, of course, necessary for a child to be brought up in a society; so the subconscious is a necessary evil. The society has to teach the child many things – but they should not become fetters. That's why I say that a better society, a real, moral society, will also teach, side by side, how to break this subconscious. A better society will give its children the subconscious with a conscious methodology as to how to drop it when it is not needed, a methodology as to how to be free of it. It is needed up to the point when you become aware, when you achieve an awakened state of mind – until then, it is needed. It is just like a blind man's staff: a staff cannot substitute for the eyes, but a blind man needs it, and it is helpful.

Control is impossible; mastery is possible. But mastery has a different root. Mastery means knowledge; control means fear. When you know something, you become the master; then, there is no need to control. And knowledge means *direct experience*. (...) *Pure knowing is the right posture*.

Ajata Shatru means, one who has no enemies in the world: no enemy is born; no enemy can be born.

You cannot attain silence directly – you have to attain non-wavering; then, silence comes as a shadow. (...) When you begin to be silent, you begin to be in deep communion with Existence.

The body is a mirror; it is transparent. (...) You look at me, and I know what is happening inside your eyes – because how can you raise your eyes without expressing that which is within? It is being shown every moment; every moment is an indication. It is related; nothing is irrelevant. You cannot deceive – you can deceive with your language, but you cannot deceive with your body.

One needs to give up everything for sudden methods. – *Are you ready to die for it?* Nothing less will do. Total consciousness is needed. (...) For gradual methods, such is not the requirement: you can go on living and doing something.

Do not create divisions; grow as a unity.

The more you love, the more you will grow. A person who can love more is more enriched. (...) Love is the foundation of prayer. (...) We are all poor because we cannot love.

If you cannot concentrate on anything else, then your mind will be flowing through the channel of sex constantly. Whenever a person can concentrate on any other thing, sex will not be a problem for him.

When you are thinking about sex, you are totally absorbed: there is no wavering – you even forget that you are thinking about sex; you become one with it. (...) This is what is meant when *bhaktis* say, “the constant remembering of the Divine – without you, without I”. (...) And unless the Divine becomes as absorbing as sex is naturally, you cannot flow upward. So the upward flow is an effort; you have to pull yourself together for it. (...) The upward flow is bound to be an effort for us: unless you will it, you will not achieve it.

Whenever you feel convenience, comfort, easiness, then be alert: the mind is flowing downward. (...) Outwardly, it makes no difference: you may be in comfort outwardly – but inwardly, never allow comfort to set in. This is the meaning of *tapas* or austerity. (...) Create inward inconvenience continuously, and go on changing. When something becomes convenient, leave it; create something new. Then, by these inconveniences, you create a crystallization inside; you become integrated, one. And for this oneness, this integration, this crystallization, alchemists use the word *gold*: now, the baser metal has been changed into higher. So, continuously be aware that some integration must take place; no moment should be missed in which you have not tried to integrate yourself. (...) If you continuously create inward inconvenience, a deeper source energy will come. This is how to integrate your mind and how to let it be arrowed upwards continuously.

Every tension means that you have been pulling yourself together towards something which is not natural. (...) So in the West particularly, sex has become just a relief from tensions; sex is used by 99% of the people as a tranquilizer.

When you are violent, you alone are not violent: your whole history is violent; when you are sexual, you alone are not sexual: the whole history is sexual – that’s why these things have so much force; you are just a leaf in a big current.

Don’t be concerned negatively. Change the energy, the door, the path, the outlet positively, through a creative change.

Man is not born fixed, complete; he is born only as a multi-potentiality, and he can fall down – below nature. He can be more animalistic than any animal; and he can be a super-human being also: he can be just divine. This range of possibilities is there. (...) The average mind is never beyond fourteen years of age; the average mind remains below thirteen and a half: the mind remains in a primitive, primary state. Body becomes complete; mind remains incomplete; and

spirit is not even touched – man dies without ever having evolved any spirit. (...) An incomplete body cannot have a mind; an incomplete mind cannot have a soul; and an incomplete soul cannot realize the Divine. Really, body works as a womb for the mind; and mind works as a womb for the spirit; and then, spirit works as a womb for God.

If your mind becomes negative, suppressive, you go on fighting things which are “not good”. (...) But when a person is fighting violence, he will never be non-violent, because to fight violence, one needs to be violent. (...) The very fight means you are angry; you are not at ease with your anger. (...) Your violence is not against others; your violence is against yourselves: (...) if you win, then also there will be anger – only anger will have won against anger. (...) This negative fight will narrow down your consciousness more and more, and you will become afraid of everything. A negative mind is always in fear: everything creates guilt and everything creates fear; you are just in a deep escape from everything. You will become so much afraid that you will just hide within yourself, and everywhere around will be all the enemies. You have created them because you became negative. This is suppression, and you will end in a madhouse. Everything that you have suppressed, you will have to suppress continuously; the fight will be so continuous that you will not be able to do anything else. If you are fighting sex, then it will be enough – your whole life will be just a fight. (...) Sex will not take so much energy, it will not dissipate so much energy, as fighting with sex. (...) Whenever you are negative, you only dissipate energy: nothing is gained; nothing creative is achieved – you become self-destructive. So, always remember never to be negative; then, there will be no suppression.

Train your inner energy to flow upward. You are not really concerned with the river going downward; you are concerned with a different river going upward: your mind is basically concerned with the inner energy which can go upward. Feel thankful for the river, because it gives you an opportunity. (...) You can feel yourself only because the river is going downward. The feeling that you can go upward even when the river is flowing down gives you a very different quality of confidence: you can go upward. And now, even if you relax and flow with the river, you know very well that you can go upward; now, even this downward flow with the river is not a defeat: you have known something – something different from nature.

There is another possibility in which *tantra* has gone very deep. *Tantra* says, there is a possibility when you flow downward with the river and still you flow upward. Then, *only your body* is carried away – how can the river carry *you* away? It can carry only the body. (...) *Tantra* tried to create many downward rivers. So, go into the river, feel the downward flow, flow with it, and remember constantly that you are not flowing. I was saying that by fighting with sex, you may be obsessed with sex totally. There is another possibility: even going deeply into sex, you may not be sexual at all – but that possibility opens only when your effort becomes positive. This is what I mean by positive effort against the current: it is not really against the current; it is for consciousness. The current is being used just as an opportunity – just to weigh yourself, just to find yourself out; just to feel the upward, the downward is needed. And the more forceful the

current, the more forceful will be the feeling of the upward. So, use nature as an opportunity, not as an enemy. Use instincts as friends, not as enemies: they are friends – only through your ignorance, you make them enemies. (...) And when someone reaches the original source, the peak of the river from where the river comes down, one is just thankful – thankful towards the river, grateful towards the river, because it is only through the river that he could achieve the source. So, when someone reaches the peak of consciousness, one is thankful to every instinct – because they all helped; they all created the situation; they all created the opportunity. And they were flowing in the opposite direction – so their opposite flow is not really against you; the river is not against you. (...) So use nature to transcend it; (...) take it as a play – otherwise, everything disturbs you and you become very serious. (...) A saint must be playful, because nothing is against him; everything is for him – he can use everything for himself.

Play! See what you can do. (...) Someone has insulted you; the button has been pushed. Can you remain non-angry? Just play – play with the situation; don't be serious. The moment you become serious, you become angry, really. Anger is very serious. Be playful, laugh, and see that the anger has been put on, that the conditioned mind has been put on: the anger is boiling there; now, swim against the current – take it as a play. The anger has been created in the metabolism – can you still swim beyond it? (...) One who is in fear, afraid, fighting, will be serious – dead serious. How can he laugh? How can he play? If the current pushes him, he will feel defeated. The other one who is playing will not be serious at all: he can laugh with the river; he can laugh with the waves. And if the current pushes him down, he will not feel defeated – he will try again. He will not be serious; rather, he will begin to love the river because it pushes. He will begin to love the river! The difference will be inner, qualitative. (...) Transforming oneself is play: it is sincere, it is authentic, but never serious. The quality of playfulness always remains there; it is the very spirit. With positivity, you are creating something inside. The outward is an opportunity; the inside creation is the thing – the emphasis is on something else: it is not on fighting the river; it is on the upward flow.

For example: I am writing something on a blackboard. I use a blackboard, but I write with white chalk, because on a blackboard, the white chalk becomes clear in contrast. I can write on a white wall also, but the writing will not be there, because the contrast is not there. So the blackboard is not against the white chalk: the blackboard is not the enemy; really, it is the friend. (...) My intention is to make the white lines clear, not to destroy the blackboard, not to make it into an enemy – then it will be a fight.

Your emphasis must be on what you are trying to achieve. Be positively concerned with love. (...) The moment love is there, the whole energy is transformed: it begins to flow “lovewards”.

Whatsoever you are, you are your own creation. (...) Don't be concerned with hell; be concerned with heaven, and begin to create it. (...) Don't fight with darkness – create the light; be concerned with the creation of light.

Only when you are *for* something does your future open; when you are *against* something, you are clinging to the past. (...) Create the future; be *for* something – then you become positive.

If you fight against something, your force dies with your enemy. (...) So never think in terms of good and bad; always think in terms of good and better. The bad must be thrown out; it must not be given any status in the mind. (...) Once you create good and bad, soon the good will drop; and bad and worse and worse will follow. So nothing is bad, but better things are possible. Always remember, and struggle for better things – then you have a positive flow.

Freedom is only felt against slavery. When you really become free, you neither feel freedom nor slavery: (...) a totally free mind will be so free that it cannot be aware of freedom, and it will not be aware of any bondage – it will be aware only of life which is moving with no motivation. (...) The immediate living is freedom.

A really free consciousness will not be sensual: it has lived life's experiences so deeply that there is no need to repeat; there is no repetitive hankering. The need to repeat comes because you cannot live any moment totally.

The less you live, the more you have to substitute for it by your dreaming mind. The less you live, the more the mind has to substitute for it; the more you live, the less is the need of the mind to substitute. When you live totally, mind is not needed. (...) And any moment that is lived totally, you will never long for it to be repeated, because you long only for something which has remained incomplete. The mind goes on back again and again to complete it.

There are two basic divisions: the *path of relaxation* and the *path of effort*; the *path of surrender* and the *path of will*. (...) The path of surrender has only one way and there are no branches; there cannot be different types of surrender. Surrender means absolute will-lessness: surrender is not an act; rather, it is a *recognition*. There is no will, so you cannot will; you cannot *do* anything. Everything is just happening: you have happened, and all else that followed has just been a happening; to feel this, to know this, is a *recognition*. And with this recognition, ego disappears, because the ego can exist only if there is will. (...) The path of will has many divisions. All the *yogas*, methods, belong to this path, which says: "you cannot relax just now; so we will prepare you – a preparation is needed. So follow these methods, and a moment will come when you will drop." (...) In the beginning, will and surrender are diametrically opposed. The end is always the same, but the beginning differs. The nearer you reach, the less is the difference between paths. (...) Either *zero* or *perfection*, both go to the same end.

Begin with will and put your whole being into it; only then will you be able to know whether this path can work for you or not. (...) Then you reach to the most perfect ego, and when the ego is perfect, the bubble bursts. Or, if you are not of that type, then you will go round and round and round and round... and you will experience frustration after frustration. Then you reach another peak – the peak of frustration – and surrender happens. (...) Either you succeed or you fail; but work so hard that if you succeed, you succeed *totally*, or if you fail, you fail

totally, and that *totality* will decide. Mild efforts and mediocre efforts lead nowhere. (...) If you succeed totally, then will disappears. Being perfect, it dies. If you fail totally, then will-lessness becomes a recognition and surrender follows. (...) When someone tries with his whole heart and fails, then the other path opens. It is a sudden path, like an emergency door which opens only when there is an emergency and total failure. Now the usual door will not do. Surrender is an emergency door: you begin with the usual – the will; when will fails totally, the emergency door opens. (...) So you cannot begin with surrender – no one can. Everyone has to begin with will. The point to remember is: be total in it.

Mind constantly arrowed towards the Divine is the offering. (...) Offering is a *total* phenomenon. (...) a total surrender is that in which nothing has been left behind, no withholding, so you cannot go back. There is no return possible, because no one remains behind to go back.

In the absence of one-pointed offering, when the mind looks at things, they are divided into polarities: (...) division sets in. The mind works as a prism, and the prism divides reality.

Constantly arrowed towards the Divine means, now the container has no other contents than the Divine – no thought, no memory, no past, no desires, no future, nothing. Now the mind as container has only one content – the Divine. This is the offering.

The *first meaning of total* is that you are in it without any part outside – with no withholding, with no division. (...) The *second meaning of totality* is that whatsoever you are doing, whatever technique of meditation, your doing must be without any doubt. (...) And *thirdly*, we have many layers of energy. In a total effort, all the layers should become committed, involved. Don't be deceived so soon. Go on doing – and when you feel that "No, nothing can be done; I have done everything and there is no energy left", continue! This is the moment: continue! And soon, you will become aware that a sudden rush of energy is coming to you from a second layer. A new earth has been broken. Become totally involved with all the layers. (...) When your total energy is involved, you will never feel exhausted; you will never feel that the point has come when "I cannot do more". That feeling always comes when one layer is exhausted; and when the next layer is exhausted, that feeling will come again. And there are seven layers: when the seventh layer is broken, that feeling will never come again – never! (...) You will go on doing more and more and more, and you will feel that still more is left. Then you are total in it. The total is never exhausted, remember; you cannot empty it. (...) So when the total energy is there working, there will be no end to it and time will drop; then, you cannot feel time. (...) Time is really a feeling of limitations. So whatsoever has a limit, you will feel time around it; it is relative.

Life is a self-evident fact; you cannot doubt it. (...) Realizations are self-evident – (...) when they happen, you know; when they are there, you know. And the knowing is evident in itself: it needs no outer proof, no outer witness. Your knowing becomes the only evidence. (...) Even if the whole world stands against it as a witness, even then your feeling of the truth of your knowing cannot be

shaken. (...) So the moment you happen to be in totality, in that totality you will know it.

Remember this: whatsoever you encounter, it is your own mind.

The inward journey begins, the search for inner life begins only when you begin to feel that outside is nothing but darkness. And unless you turn your eyes inwards, light is not to be found.

Remain continuously in discontent until the light is achieved – continuously in discontent! That is one of the most basic qualities of a religious mind. Ordinarily, we think that a religious man is a contented man; that is nonsense. He looks contented because he has the discontent of another dimension. He can live in a poor house; he can live in ordinary clothes; he can live naked; he can live under a tree – he can look contented, not because he is contented with these things, but because, really, his discontent has gone towards other things, and now he cannot be bothered with these worldly arrangements. These things have just become peripheral – really, they don't mean anything to him; they are irrelevant. They are somewhere on the periphery; he is not concerned. But he lives in a deep discontent, in a fiery discontent, and only that discontent can lead you inwards. (...) Unless you achieve light, unless you transcend mind, be discontent, remain discontented.

There are *three types*: intellectual, emotive, and active. No one is a pure type; every one is just mixed. And all three are in everyone. So, the real question is, which type is predominant. (...) If you are a knowing type, then all your experiences basically will begin with knowing, never with anything else. (...) Decision can only come through a long knowing process. That's why this type is ordinarily never active – he cannot be, because by the time he can conclude, the moment has passed. When he comes to a conclusion, the conclusion is meaningless; and when the moment was there to conclude, he could not – so, active he cannot be. And this is one of the calamities in the world: those who can think cannot be active; and those who can be active cannot think. And always remember, the knowing type consists of very few. The percentage is very small – two or three percent at the most. For them, everything will begin by knowing – only then will feeling follow, and only then action. This will be the sequence with this type: knowing, feeling, and action. He may miss, but he cannot do otherwise.

Thinking is a process of ignorance: you think because you don't know; it is a groping in the dark. (...) The knowing inside is authentic religion.

If you are left alone for a long period, your ego will, by and by, subside. By and by, you will feel that your ego is being starved – because the ego needs constant help from others: it needs a constant energy, food from others. (...) The ego is enough as far as the world is concerned, society is concerned, and relationship is concerned.

To be in loneliness means: to be without thou, to be totally alone. Then, the ego cannot exist: it will wither away and you will be thrown into chaos, because you will be, for a certain period, without any center. This chaos has to be faced; unless you face it, you cannot be centered in your Self; you have to pass through this. (...) You have nowhere to function from; you have no unity now: you are just fragments with no energy in them, with no center, with no focus. You are a crowd; you will be mad – this madness has to be faced. (...) This is the real austerity: to pass through it without creating any false center again. (...) You will wait. This waiting may take any length of time; nothing can be said. The deeper one is rooted in ego, the longer it takes to dissolve it. (...) The more civilization progresses, the more difficult it is – because very progressive civilization is bound to have a solidifying effect on the egos that constitute that civilization. (...) The passing through a chaos without a center, being a chaos, ultimately throws you down to the center, to the real center, to the Self.

There are two ways to go through this chaos, two ways to destroy the ego. *One way is surrender.* The foundation is always to surrender to someone; it is not significant to whom – the real thing is *surrendering*. If you surrender, you come to the real Self. When you surrender, the Self cannot be surrendered. Whatsoever you surrender is bound to be the ego, false, the persona – not the essence. (...) *Another way is absolute will.* Again, the ego has no will; it cannot have. The ego is absolutely will-less, because a false entity cannot have the quality of will. Will belongs to the real. Will means *one*, no duality; ego means, many contradictory wills simultaneously. You are a crowd, as far as ego is concerned, and it is bound to be. It is natural, because ego is created by many relationships. It is a by-product. (...) Gurdjieff used to say that we are like a house, the master of which is either asleep or has gone somewhere else. For years the house has not known its master. There are many servants, and these servants have forgotten completely that there was ever any master. (...) Every servant claims that he is the master, and nothing can be decided because the master is asleep or has gone somewhere else. These servant-masters can decide something, but they cannot complete it; they can promise something, but they cannot fulfill it – they are not masters at all. This is the situation of the ego: it cannot will. So the second path is to create a will. If you create a will, then the ego will disappear, because only the Self can will. (...) This is an anti-surrender path. (...) You can fight with sleep; you can fight with food; you can fight with sex; you can fight with anything. – But then, no compromise! Then, no surrender! Be absolute in it. But ego cannot be absolute in anything. And if you insist on being absolute, then ego will disappear, and suddenly you will become aware of a different center in yourself. (...) So either surrender totally, or win totally. (...) The ego can never be total in anything; it is always fragmentary, divided. So be total, in any way, and the ego evaporates. And when there is no ego, you become aware of your real center.

I call it centering; Gurdjieff calls it crystallization. (...) Through this centering you become a being; through this centering, you are in Existence. Before this, you are in society; before this, you are part of a civilization; before this, you belong to a man-created world. Once you are centered, you belong to that which is beyond, which is not created, which is eternal; then, you come to the source.

The real Teacher, the real *Guru*, exists *within you*. Outside you, the Teacher is just a help to awaken the inner Teacher. So, really, surrendering to a Teacher is surrendering to the Self. It is just like this: you come to a mirror, and for the first time you become aware of your face – through the mirror. The Teacher is just a mirror: if you surrender, you become aware of your own Self.

Surrender or will – decide, either this or that, and then follow it – and follow it totally, because that totality will ultimately destroy the false structure of the ego. And when the false center is no more, you will come to know the real center. There will be a gap, a gap of chaos – one has to face it; one has to pass through it. It is a necessity. (...) And once you have known your real center, you are not the same. The old man has died, and a new one is born. (...) When the child is born, only a body is born; then the ego is given by society – the body is given by your parents, and the ego is given by society. You go on living with an ego and a body – but with no Self. Unless you dissolve this ego and find the Self, your life is wasted. Who are you? Gurdjieff used to say that *you are not*; you are just a construct. Unless you find out something that has not come through the parents, not come through the society, not come at all to you – something which you have always been – unless you find that, you are not a centered being; you go on living on the periphery. The peripheral existence is called *samsara*; the centered existence is called *nirvana*.

Three things are to be remembered. *One*, if you are existing in the ego, you can never be in silence – never. You are in a crowd; your ego is a market production. (...) *Secondly*, you can never find even an iota of happiness in the ego. If you are in the ego, happiness will always be in the future. (...) *And thirdly*, in the ego, your life motivation will be fear. Whatsoever you do will be fear-oriented, and *you* will be fear-oriented.

Death is impossible to the center, to the real center. Deathlessness is the very quality of it, its nature.

If you are in the real center, silence will be your nature, not dependent on any situation. Whatsoever the situation, you will be silent; you cannot be otherwise. Nothing can disturb you. Disturbance will be there, but you will remain unaffected, untouched. Nothing penetrates to your center; it cannot.

When there is no fear, only then is freedom possible. Fear and freedom cannot exist together. It is because of fear that we have created all our slaveries, all our bondages. Our imprisonment is because of fear.

A meditative mind reaches to a state of thoughtlessness, and then only is revelation possible; otherwise, you will go on projecting. Thought cannot do otherwise – it will project.

Mind has two capacities: one is that it can project anything; and the other is that it can be totally vacant. These are the two possibilities. If the mind is used as a positive projection, then you can realize anything you like, but it is not a realization – you are living in a dream. Vacate the mind, and face reality with a vacant mind, with no thought – then, you will know what reality is.

Witnessing is the technique for centering.

You are so much touched, not because your center is touched, but only because you have no center: you are just the periphery, identified with the periphery. The periphery is bound to be touched by everything – everything that happens. It is your boundary; so whatsoever happens is bound to touch it. (...) The moment you have a center, you have a distance from yourself; you have a distance from your periphery. (...) Between you as your periphery and you as the center, there is a distance, and that distance cannot be broken by anyone else – because no one can penetrate to the center. The outside world can touch you only as periphery.

Understand clearly the difference between action and reaction. (...) The act comes from you; the reaction is forced upon you. Centering means, now you have begun to act. (...) When you act, the act is always total. When you react, it can never be total: it is always partial, fragmentary, because I am not involved in it really. (...) And a partial act is bound to be contradictory, in conflict with itself. On the periphery, everything is going to be self-contradiction; only when you act from the center is your act total.

A total act has a beginning and an end: it is there, and then, it is not there; you are completely free from it to move into the unknown. Otherwise, you go on moving in the same circular way, in a vicious circle. You go on continuously in it, because the past is never finished: it comes into the present; it goes on and penetrates into the future. (...) The dead past will fall upon a single moment of the present; it is bound to kill it. So you cannot live; it is impossible. (...) You can come to this moment fresh only when there is no past to be carried. (...) The mind has a tendency to finish everything. If it is unfinished, then it has to be carried; the moment it is finished, the mind is unburdened from it. Unless it is finished, the mind is bound to come to it again and again. (...) Whatsoever you are doing – your love, your sex, your friendship – everything is unfinished.

Man could create a society, a world, only because of language – but because of language, he has forgotten himself.

Witnessing means, becoming dead to your past, memory, thought – everything. Unless you die first, nothing can be attained; unless you are reborn, nothing can be attained. (...) Die every moment to the past, whatever it has been; die to it, and be fresh and young and reborn into the moment. You can only witness *now* if you are fresh.

Your body, your mind, your emotions – everything has been corrupted; everything has been influenced, impressed by the outside. You are being converted every moment. Only one thing remains in you totally uncorrupted, untouched, and that is *akshat*, your witnessing nature: the world cannot touch it.

This is the nature – the inner sky, the inner space. One uncovers it, discovers it, through witnessing.

Many are the methods to work directly to create more awareness in yourself, to bring yourself above your so-called sleepy existence. (...) Because of this path, Mahavir was given his name, *the great warrior*. It is a lonely path. You cannot even have a helper with you, because then the struggle loosens; then the struggle becomes partial – then you can depend on someone else; and wherever there is dependence, sleep comes in. One has to be totally independent; only then can one be awake.

If you are fasting and just witnessing, without being identified or bothered – the body is suffering, the body is hungry, the body is demanding – and you are just witnessing, then suddenly, the body will be different. There will be a discontinuity between you and the body; there will be a gap. (...) Mohammedans have used vigilance in the night – no sleep! Don't sleep for a week, and then you will know how sleepy the whole being becomes, how difficult it is to maintain this vigilance. But if one persists, suddenly a moment comes when the body and you are torn apart. Then you can see that *the body* needs sleep – it is not *your* need.

On the path of will, ego is not the concern – the Self is. On the path of surrender, the Self is not the concern – the concern is to be totally lost in the Divine. (...) A Mahavir will become more and more centered on the path, more and more one Self. And Chaitanya will be less and less one Self on the path; he will go on throwing himself unto the Divine feet. To Mahavir it will look like suicide, and to Chaitanya, Mahavir's path will look like a very egoistic thing. (...) Chaitanya uses going to the Divine feet – *sharanam* – as the basic religious effort. But Mahavir says *asharanam* – never go to anybody's feet. (...) Both paths are valid, and there is no question of which is better. It depends on the person who is following.

Man is a seed, a possibility, a potentiality. (...) He can grow, and man can be only if he grows. If a seed remains a seed, that means death; if a seed is not growing, then it is dying – you cannot remain in between. (...) And to grow means to transcend; to grow means to die on a particular level and to be reborn on another. (...) A seed can die in two ways. It can just die without growing; then it is negative death. Or, a seed can die to grow; then it is positive death, and positive death is the door to more life. Positive death means dying *for* something – dying to grow, disappearing from one plane to appear on another.

All human beliefs are conveniences, but dangerous. Because of them, the possibility to evolve is nullified completely, negated completely. (...) You can decorate your prison in such a way that it begins to look like your home; your chains can become your ornaments. The prisoner can think that he is not a

prisoner, but already a free man. This is convenient to believe, because then, there is no burden – but then, this prisoner can never be free. So Gurdjieff says that the first necessary step towards freedom is to recognize the humiliating fact that you are a prisoner – only then does growth become possible.

Don't fight; don't indulge – both are easy. The only thing which is very uncomfortable and uneasy, is to remain alert. (...) If you are alert, two things happen: the energy that was going to be used as indulgence or as suppression will become part of your alertness. Your alertness will be strengthened by that energy; that energy will become a fuel to your consciousness. You will be more conscious; you will know the feeling of freedom; and the unconscious will not be able to manipulate and force you. And, by and by, the field of consciousness will grow, and the field of unconsciousness will shrink. (...) This is a long journey, and by and by, you will become two parts conscious, eight parts unconscious; then three parts conscious, seven parts unconscious. The unconscious is a vast ocean; you have to reclaim land inch by inch. A day comes when you are conscious all the ten parts, and the unconscious has disappeared – you are just light and no darkness. This is the flowering.

If you grow in consciousness, you will grow in compassion; and if you grow in compassion, you will grow in consciousness.

The higher you move in consciousness, the further you go from sex.

Whatever happens in the inner mind, be conscious about it. Don't be in a hurry to act. Remain with the fact – alert. (...) The very quality of the mind changes the moment you become an observer inside, a consciousness inside.

The seed is broken asunder and the plant is born. It is delicate, very delicate. And one has to protect it continuously for many, many days, for many, many years and sometimes for many, many lifetimes. If once begun, the seed is broken, the plant will become a tree – and one day, there is a flowering. That flowering is the concern of religion: to make man a flower is the whole concern of religion.

Sadhguru, in my hectic schedule, where can I fit yoga into my life? – From 6 in the morning until you go to bed, you have a busy day. You have time to take care of everything, but you have no time to take care of yourself, that's what you are telling me. Now, this attitude is, you try to act like a martyr all the time: "I have no time for myself; I am giving myself totally to everybody". What is it that you are giving? Your irritations, anxieties, you are passing them on to your children and to other people, isn't it? If you are truly concerned about your children, then creating an atmosphere of joy and love around them is most important, on a daily basis, from moment to moment. This is more important than all the nonsense you are providing, isn't it? (...) So what is your focus about life? Do what you can do, according to your abilities; everybody can only do that much, isn't it? If you want to do everything in the world, you will definitely go insane. How much you can do, each individual must decide. Now, you are trying to be like somebody else, that's your whole problem. Your education, your career, your house, your children, your husband, your wife, whatever – you are no more

enjoying it. Then why do you need all this? You have created all these things because you thought that this is the source of your joy, your happiness and your well-being, isn't it? But right now, this has become the source of your anxiety and misery; right now, this is taking your life. If this is so, then you better look at the fundamentals of your life once again, isn't it so? (...) If your mind and body become more organized, unnecessary things will go away, and you will have a lot more time. If we are organized and focused human beings, we can do plenty in 24 hours time. If you are disorganized and unfocused, you think that there is no time – but most of you are not busy, just preoccupied, aren't you? Isn't it so? There is too much preoccupation in the mind. (...) Don't go into this argument "I have no time" – invest some time every day, and the quality of your life will be very different. Make time and see; it will make a huge difference.

Nobody is miserable because of his abilities or disabilities: one hand less or one eye less do not cause misery. What causes misery is this: "everybody else has two; I have only one" – that causes misery, isn't it? So, a disease or a disability fundamentally does not cause misery. It creates a certain physical situation, but misery is created by *you* – only by you, nobody else but you. Misery is always self-created. Situations are happening: some situations the way you like it, some situations the way you don't like it; some situations the way you can handle it, some situations the way you cannot handle it – this is how life is happening, but misery is caused by you, isn't it so? – So with every situation you cannot handle, if you want to make yourself miserable, you have a lot of opportunity every day. And you're making use of it, obviously. (...) Just look at your life and see: how many moments in 24 hours are you truly joyful? Very few, isn't it, if at all you are? That's an unfortunate way to live; that's all I'm telling you.

See, bad things don't happen to anybody – things happen; different kinds of things happen to people. When you don't like it, you think it's bad. So what is bad and good is just what you like and dislike, isn't it? (...) Somewhere, we have made investments in our deceptions so deep that there is really no way out. Somewhere, we are all mixed up in deceptions which prevent us from living joyfully. The first and foremost thing which you owe to yourself is: you must at least be straight with yourself, 100%.

Why do you believe what somebody tells you? How do you know this man knows? You do not know, isn't it? Something may be a reality for someone else, something may be a 100% true for someone else, but as far as you are concerned, it is just a fairytale, isn't it so? (...) If you believe me, it will not get you anywhere; if you disbelieve me, it will still not get you anywhere. The only thing is: if you believe me, you have an interesting story to tell someone; if you disbelieve me, your life is barren. That's all the difference between believers and disbelievers: disbelievers' life is a little barren because they have no fairytales; believers have wonderful stories to tell – isn't it so? You don't like it, I know, but is it so or no?

Believing something, why has it arisen in you? Believing things which are not yet a reality in your life means, somewhere you are lying to yourself, isn't it? Disbelieving is also lying to yourself. Somebody believes in this; somebody else disbelieves in this – both of them are believing something that they do not know, isn't it? (...) If you see, "I do not know", if you become a big "I do not know", then the longing to know will burn within you. When the longing comes, seeking will happen; when the seeking happens, knowing will come. What is within you cannot be denied to you by anybody else except yourself. And you will deny it to yourself, simply because you believe something. You believe there is God; you believe there is no God – you're still in the same boat, but you believe that you are opposite parties. Both of you are believing something that you do not know. If you simply see, "I do not know" – the simple nature of the intelligence is such that you cannot live with "I do not know" forever. You have to find it. But your willingness is not there, because you are invested in your belief systems. You believe in so many things that you do not know.

If you are really sincere about making a journey, first thing is to see, what I know, I know; what I do not know, I do not know. Now, with my longing to know, I can see what is the next step, and the next step, and the next step. This is the only way you will go somewhere. Otherwise, you will just hallucinate.

Desire is not desiring for anything in particular. The energy which you call as desire is not different from the energy which you call as life. If you want to move from point A to point B, you need a desire, isn't it? It is your desire that takes you through life. The very basis of your life is desire, isn't it? So if I tell you, "kill the desire", then the only way is to hang yourself; there is really no other way. And if you want to die, that is also a desire, isn't it? So do not deceive yourself with these things. Desire is the very essence of your life. But at the same time, you also know that desire is an unending thing: if you fulfill one, the next one will be ready – it keeps you on, all the time. And obviously, some desires will be unfulfilled, and those unfulfilled desires cause much misery to you. If you look at the desire, there is something within you wanting to be a little more than what you are right now, isn't it? That is desire. So your desire's ultimate goal is unboundedness, the infinite nature. But, because you are unaware, you are giving an unconscious expression to the longing that is wanting to become unbounded. So you cannot destroy your desire, because desire is life; it is just that you have to make your desire into a conscious process. Then, desire is a wonderful vehicle which can take you places. Even if you want to reach the Ultimate, you need a desire, isn't it? You just have to bring awareness to it; then desire is a wonderful instrument. If it is finding unconscious expression, it makes you run like mad men; all the time it keeps you running endlessly. Right now, your desire is functioning unconsciously; because right now, your desires are not even about you. Please look at this. (...) Your desire is just a reaction to the social situation in which you're living, isn't it? You look at the people around you and you want more and better than what they have, isn't it so?

The sum total of all the impressions that you have taken in creates certain tendencies within you. Everything that is gone into your five sense organs is recorded inside, and an amalgamation of all these impressions starts creating their own tendencies. These tendencies tend to take you this way or that way; they take different people in different directions. But if you are willing to make your life process conscious, then there is no destiny for you; then destiny is 100% your creation – even now it is so; it is just that you are creating it unconsciously. But you can also create it consciously to an extent that the very way you live, the very way you die, will be by choice; the very womb that you choose will be by choice – you can take your destiny into your hand to that extent. The moment you say, “I’m on the spiritual path”, what it means is that “I have taken my destiny into my hands”. Whatever my *karma* says, whatever my society says, whatever my parents were, that’s not the point – I am going towards liberation, and that’s all.” And you should take your destiny into your hands. Once you are born as human beings, you should not become who you are because of the situations in which you live – you must make the situations happen. Just being influenced by situations is *animal nature*; *human nature* means, man creates his situations, isn’t it? So if you’re allowing your life to happen to you helplessly, you are ruled by destinies. Destinies are just accumulated impressions within you which are creating certain directions in your life. But if you become conscious, you can give a conscious direction to your life.

Whether you say: “God is everywhere”, or: “everything is one energy” – is it any different? Same reality, isn’t it so?

The fact of the matter is that most of the time, I don’t have any thought in me. For me, the phenomenon of life that is happening within me always overwhelms everything else. Thought occurs to me only when I want to do something, arrange something around me – otherwise, days on end will pass for me without a single thought.

My only *sadhana* has been that, right from my childhood, I never got identified with anything – either the family, or the culture, or a religion, or the society, or various other things happening around me. I was involved with them, but never identified with them. If human intelligence does not tie itself down with identity, every human being will realize the nature of life.

The nature of the human being is such: no matter what you do, you want to be something more than what you are right now; and if that something more happens, then a new something more – it’s an endless pursuit. So somewhere, a human being is seeking a limitless expansion, but trying to do it with physical means: the very nature of physicality is defined boundaries; but now, a human being is longing for the boundless through physical means. The desire is phantastic; the method is hopeless – because the moment you identify yourself with something, the intellect will protect this identity.

The entire human experience is happening *within you*; the very seat of your experience is *within you*.

Karma is not because of your engagements in life with something; *karma* is because of the way you deal within yourself. It is something that you are doing to yourself; it is not something that life is doing to you – so what kind of *karma* you do to yourself is your choice. If you do this, you can become joyful; if you do that, you can become miserable; if you do something else, you can become ecstatic – it's just *you*. So this must be understood: *karma* means action, *your* action. So, this is a great insight into life, that you understand: your life is *your* making; it is *your* doing – it is not somebody else's doing. And only because it is *your* doing, there is room for liberation. (...) So you can use people around you either to break your *karma*, to cause a *karma of liberation*, or to cause a *karma of bondage*. Any way, you are doing something always; you can't help that, isn't it? Physically, mentally, emotionally, energetically – something is happening within you *all the time*, awake or asleep; you cannot dodge that. If you're aware, you will cause *karma of liberation*; if you're unaware, you will cause the *karma of bondage*. You don't necessarily need other people for that. Sitting alone in a room, you can create *karma* with anybody and anything in the world – because it's something you are doing within yourself; it is not an interaction with somebody. You are like a silkworm using his own marrow to weave a cocoon for himself: the cocoon is going to kill him if he doesn't break it some day. If he breaks it, he becomes a beautiful butterfly; if he doesn't, he will die within the cocoon. That's all *karma* is: if you crack it, it becomes the source of liberation; if you die in it, then it becomes the greatest bondage, because you die in your own cocoon – not somebody else's making, but your own making. The very fundamentals of *karma* means: it's *my* doing; everything about me is *my* doing; this is *my* action; this is *my* creation. It's an inside job: you're not having *karma* with anybody – no! it's *your* making: it is *your* bondage; it is *your* liberation. Two persons are living together, doing many things together, the same things – one may be becoming free; the other may be becoming entangled. The very word *karma* means: it is *my* doing; nobody else is involved in this business.

For one who is seeing this life as a stepping stone for a larger possibility, for him there is no failure; but for one who is looking at the simple events of this life itself as the goal of life, for him there is failure and success. If you are just seeing this life as a stepping stone for a larger possibility, then: if you have a good deal, you use that for your well-being; if you have a bad deal, you use that for your well-being. If you see this life as a stepping stone for a larger possibility, then whatever the situation, it is beautiful and very useful – very, very useful. So, the various situations in your life, either you can use them to make yourself stronger and better, or you can sit and cry. This is a choice you have. Everything, it does not matter what happens, can be used for your growth and well-being: everything is beneficial; all things in your life are just stepping stones. Your life is about *mukti*: your marriage, your business, your social life – these are all just means to get there. Whatever your way of life, whatever your environment, whatever the circumstances around you, whether you walk alone or whether you have a party going with you, your only goal is *mukti*.

Success only comes if you are capable of it. You are successful in life if you are capable to walk with joy whatever the situation of life. (...) Don't become a slave to somebody's idea of what is success; at least, have your own idea – and you have no idea of your own; don't deceive yourself: every idea, every thought, every emotion, every value that you have is picked up from somewhere, and it rules you from within. *It rules you from within.* Your religion, your society, your culture has trained you to believe that “this is it”. The first and foremost success is that you are not a slave to anybody's idea. (...) Don't make things that human beings create larger than your life – that is the basis of deception.

If you are in ignorance, then you must suffer – that is the way of life, whether you like it or whether you do not like it; that's the way it happens.

Either you learn out of your intelligence, or life will maul you and teach you a lesson still – the choice is yours.

You have to fall in love – that means, who you are should fall; only then, devotion will happen. So, if you are a true lover, then that means: *you* are not important; what happens to *you* is not important. Only then, devotion is a possibility.

According to each person's needs, that's how they seek. You can't prescribe the best way to anybody.

Everybody is asking for what he doesn't have. But if you go on asking for what you don't have, you will need a thousand years, and still you will be nowhere. So, stop seeking the next thing that you don't have – it is an endless, self-defeating process, isn't it? It seems to be taking you somewhere, but it isn't taking you anywhere.

The essence of life is in its process. Where you get in the end is not the point, really. Whatever you desire, a desire is a desire. The object of your desire just changes the direction of your destination, but does not change the process of life as such. Changing the object of the desire is not going to make the difference; it's the way we handle the process of life which is going to make the difference.

The fundamental building blocks of your personality is *likes* and *dislikes*: your personality is a complex system of likes and dislikes. So what's the difference between you and the next person? Your likes and dislikes are different, isn't it? Now, the basis of *yoga* is just this: to help you go beyond these likes and dislikes by destroying the process of like and dislike, by dissolving the personality. See, existing in the world with likes and dislikes is a very foolish way to exist. But unfortunately, the logical mind thinks: “I'll do what I like; this is my freedom.” – The very basis of your bondage is in your likes and dislikes, but your mind makes you believe that doing what you like is your freedom, isn't it?

If a human being grows up with an uncluttered intelligence, which functions without being identified with anything in particular, then knowing the inner dimension of life becomes a natural process. Right now, that possibility has been taken away, because right from day one, the parents, the teachers, the preachers,

all of society are working very hard, super hard, to get children, then adults identified with their values. They are destroying a human being's natural longing to know by giving ready-made solutions and all kinds of nonsense to believe in. So, you do not know yourself because they always make you look at some god out there, up there. Because of this, enlightenment has been exported to heaven.

You have taken a million steps outwards – just one step inwards, that's all it takes. But you are not willing to turn around, because you have made investments on the outside.

You have never seen your inside. What you are right now calling as *inside* is your mind. Your mind is not your inside. Your mind is just society's garbage bin, isn't it? Everything in your mind, you picked up from outside. Everything within your mind is just what you've been exposed to, isn't it so? See, you have no choice about what you take in – you have choice about what you make use of and what you don't, yes? But even that choice is not really a choice, because also that choice is set up by something else that's come in earlier – so you really have no choice about it. Both the content of your head and the content of your body were collected from outside, isn't it so? Both you slowly accumulated – one by eating food, the other by the impressions of the five agencies, which are not reliable, because people just perceive what they want to perceive.

The only way to know is by enhancing your perception; everything else is just belief. And what you believe is immaterial, because if we work hard enough on you, we can make you believe any damn thing; you know that very well. We can make you believe the weirdest things in the world if we work upon you right from your childhood, isn't it so? So, whatever you believe is of no existential value; it is only of social value. (...) Only by enhanced perception can you know life; there is no other way to know life. So enlightenment means a heightened level of perception.

For a majority of the population, at least 90% of their life is dedicated to their security. The steps that they are taking are not taken in search of joy or love or truth or anything; it is always in search of security, isn't it? When you are constantly in pursuit of security, what you're doing is, you're in pursuit of death – because life is never secure: it does not matter what you do, you might just fall dead. So as long as the experience of life is limited to the physical and the mental, living with fear and being constantly security-oriented is inevitable; that's the only way you can live. Once your experience becomes transcendent, then the physical and the mental are there in your life, but you're never a part of it. You can use it, you can enjoy it, but you never become that. If this freedom is attained, then you can play any way with life, but life cannot leave a single scratch upon you.

What you have to understand is: only the fundamentals of life were created by the Creator; the rest is *your* creation. (...) When it comes to what is right and wrong, this is *your* idea, isn't it? The only right thing to do is to be in tune with Life and the Creation, isn't it? Right now, about 95% of the time, you are only thinking about Life; you are not living in Life. Whatever you are thinking, you are

beginning to believe that it *is* Life, unfortunately. What you think is not Life; what you think has nothing to do with Life. You can think whatever you wish to, but it has nothing to do with Life as such.

See, right now what you consider as *myself* is just these four elements: your physical body, your mind, your emotion, and the life energy which makes these things happen. If you want something bigger to happen, you must put these four things in proper alignment. So all *yoga* is structured and designed to put these four dimensions (body, mind, emotion, energy; or: hands, head, heart, and energy) in absolute alignment. You are a combination of these four things, so you need these four basic *yogas* – there are only *four yogas*: *gnana yoga*, *bhakti yoga*, *karma yoga*, and *kriya yoga*. If you employ your intelligence to reach your ultimate nature, it's called *gnana yoga*. If you employ your emotion to reach your ultimate nature, we call it *bhakti yoga*. If we employ our body or action to reach our ultimate nature, we call it *karma yoga*. If you transform your inner energies and reach your ultimate nature, it's called *kriya yoga*. These are the only four ways. Because you are a combination of all these four, you have to employ them in right proportion, according to which dimensions are dominant in you. If the four dimensions are not in alignment, it is like you trying to drive a car one wheel pointed this way, one wheel pointed that way – with four wheels pointing in four different directions, how could we expect you to travel smoothly to any destination, for that matter? *Yoga*, what we refer to as *inner engineering*, is to just align these four dimensions in such a way that you travel smoothly. If your direction is not decided by you, but by the situations in which you live – that is the life of a slave, isn't it?

All creatures are structured in such a way: they are not thinking of serving anybody; all life is only striving for its survival and reproduction. (...) There are three natures: animal nature, human nature, and divine nature. Animal nature is very well established; divine nature is very well established – human nature is fluctuating, swinging between the two: sometimes you're nearer to this, sometimes you're nearer to that, isn't it so? – There is no such a thing that you can find out and say: "this is human nature": humanity is a flux; human beings can become anything they want. No other animal has this freedom – but this freedom is what human beings are suffering right now. Life is full of fears, anxieties, insecure comparisons with other people – and still you don't know where you belong. (...) There is something in you that always seeks the highest in life as you know it. This urge has been put into you, and freedom has been granted to you, with the trust that you will go for the highest. But right now, human beings are going about it as if they want to disprove that. (...) The choice to make yourself into what you want is there every moment. Most of the time, you are not exercising your choice, because you are existing in a compulsive way, as a reaction to many things around you. Now, our whole effort, what we call *spiritual process*, is to transform this compulsive being into a conscious being: to make every aspect of life from A to Z, life and death, into a conscious process, that is what *spiritual path* means.

Once you walk on the spiritual path, you must forget that you are either a man or a woman; that's a basic step you have to take: you must just look at yourself as Life. Why spiritual traditions have always encouraged people to take *brahmacharyas* or *sanyas* is simply to eliminate the duality in your mind. There is something which is playing between the duality; there is something which is absolute. *Spiritual path* means, you are tending to go towards the Absolute. If you invest your life in duality, you will have to do juggling: juggling is inevitable; you have chosen to juggle. Now, if you don't juggle properly, balls will fall from your hands here and there; and by the time you pick up one ball, the others fall down. This juggling entered your life because you invested in the identification with the dualities of life (f.i. marriage, career, possessions). (...) When a person transcends the limitations of duality, when the struggle of the duality is gone in him, only then the Divine manifests itself.

I would say, at least 60% of the sex in the world is happening out of insecurity, and nothing else. Not out of love, not for joy, not even for pleasure – just two bodies coming together to feel secure for a few secure moments. Most sex-based relationships happen because otherwise, people are totally lost by themselves. With all the affluence and comfort that has come to the Western societies, compared to other parts of the world, you see so much more insecurity in people's faces in the streets of a metropolis like Paris than in the face of a beggar in the streets of the Eastern countries. This has happened because, slowly, the Western cultures took on too much of a physical identity. The more you get identified with the physical, the more insecure you become, because the physical is never safe. Once identification is limited to the physical, then insecurity is the natural way, and naturally the need for sex will increase dramatically when people are insecure.

Why did you build a personality? You have never experienced life, so you constructed a false entity with which you could somehow survive. Somewhere you felt so inadequate as a being that you are trying to become some kind of a person with some strength. Because you never tasted the strength of your being, now you are tasting the false strength of your personality. Because there is such a deep insecurity of being not worthwhile, you are trying to make yourself worthwhile by building a personality. And the personality which you build is subject to so many inputs in your life... It is subject to what you are exposed to: your culture, your family, your education – all these things are playing a role in building your personality. It's socially relevant, but it has no life relevance. Your personality cannot go anywhere; it has no place to turn inward; it cannot touch any other dimension of your life – it is only a tool to push your way through in the world. When you say, I'm turning spiritual, now you have a longing to establish yourself in other dimensions of life – if that has to happen, you need a presence; you need connection with life, not with the false structures that you have built. So all *sadhana* is towards that: as a person becomes a spiritual possibility, he becomes more malleable; he's not rigid. Any moment he wants, he can dissolve and reform himself. Your personality is not you; any moment you want, you can just drop it. The less personality you carry, the more presence you have; the more personality you carry, the less presence you have. So all *sadhana*

is towards this: to dissolve the personality and to enhance the presence of life in you.

When we say *sadhana*, we are not talking about any particular aspect of life; we are talking about using every aspect of life, both internal and external, so that it is a continuous nurturing for your life. Because the very nature of a human being is such that, unless there is some dynamism, some movement in his life towards betterment within and outside of himself, he will feel frustrated – he has to keep moving to a newer and newer possibility. *Sadhana* is that which facilitates that. (...) Everything can be *sadhana*. The way you eat, the way you sit, the way you stand, the way you breathe, the way you conduct your body, mind and your energies and emotions – this is *sadhana*. *Sadhana* does not mean any specific kind of activity; *sadhana* means, you are using *everything* as a tool for your well-being.

Samsara means *cyclical*. Who you are right now is the product of certain cycles. There are many ways to look at this. The cycles of the sun, the cycles of the moon, and various other cycles in the universe – we are a product of that. The solar system is cyclical; the biology of the body is cyclical; our idea of time is cyclical – so time and the cycles of time. You can be trapped in the cycles of time, or you can ride the cycles of time. If you are trapped in the cycles of time, we say you are in *samsara*, because life becomes cyclical and it keeps repeating psychologically and physiologically. If you are looking at your life carefully, you will see it is cyclical: same things are repeating themselves, in different colors, but same things are repeating themselves over a period of time, whether it's 12 years, whether it's 6 years, whether it's 3 years – it is happening at some point. If it is happening in very short cycles, you are heading towards a psychological breakdown; if it is happening over a long enough period, you are just suffering boredom. (...) To be in *samsara*, you do not necessarily need to be married or to have a family. With children around you, you want things to happen in expected, cyclical ways; surprises look like disasters. If the number of balls you are juggling are too many, you aspire for order; you do not care about excitement anymore. If you have twelve children at home, you want everything to go like clockwork; you don't want one extra thing to happen in your house. So this is *samsara*: you want to go in cycles; you are aspiring to be in cycles – because being cyclical, at least there is a comfort: you know what is coming next. (...) But you can be wrangled up all by yourself, single people being in their own *samsara* alone. If you are married, you get a little bit of extra help, and at least you can blame it on somebody: "it's because of him or her that I am like this". (...) So once you go in cycles, it simply means that you are not getting anywhere. If you're trapped in the cycles of time, you're not getting anywhere, but you're going to do the same thing. Because you have poor memory, you do not realize that the same things are being repeated. Suppose your memory opens up to many lifetimes, and you realize you are doing the same stupid things over and over again; you got excited about the same little things again and again – you feel utterly silly, isn't it? (...) Within the cycle, that cycle means so much to you; it looks like it's everything. If you break that cycle, and something beyond the cycle becomes apparent to you, suddenly what's within the cycle is so limited and so meaningless... the relationships, the activities, the thoughts, the emotions, all these things that you

held as *everything* in your life – they suddenly go “pooooof”. So, this is *sanyas*; that is, you have broken the cycles of time: you are riding the cycles of time; you are not trapped in the cycles of time.

So, can I do *sanyas* within the family? You can, but nobody needs to know. If they know, they won’t be able to live with you, unless they are also like that. People are looking for some bondage – people don’t come together seeking freedom; they’re coming together seeking bondage, isn’t it? If they know that you are not bound by anything, it will be dangerous to live with a person like that. So, once you’ve broken the cycles of time, consciously you can be part of it when you want to be. Being a *sanyasin* within a family situation, this is not being uncaring; this is not being unconcerned – this is just being free from a certain situation. Being absolutely involved and not being entangled – that is the way to freedom; that is the way to liberation.

Isha literally means, *that which rules*. That which rules the existence is that which is the source of creation, isn’t it? When the source of creation is formless, it’s called *Isha*. So formless divinity is referred to as *Isha*. *Isha* means, that which is fundamental, that which is the source. *Isha yoga* is a means to access that dimension which is the source of your creation; it’s a method to turn inward and to access that dimension which is the source of who you are.

If you exist on the level of creation, you are subject to all the dualities of life. A lot of questions, insecurities, hesitations will come up because you have been mauled by the dualities of life in so many ways. It has added color to you; at the same time it has taken a toll upon you, isn’t it? It has brought life to you – it is only because of duality that there is a game, you and me; it is only because of duality that the game of life is happening. At the same time, the same dualities are mauling you, subjecting you to so much pain and suffering. So the purpose of *Isha yoga* is this: you root your basic experience in that dimension which we are referring to as *Isha*, which is nondual, which is the Source of Creation. But being rooted in this dimension, you play with the dualities. Now, once you’re rooted in the nondual and play with the dual, the dual has no impact upon you. You can play with it and enjoy it whichever way you like, but it doesn’t take a toll upon you. You can go through this life without a single scratch upon you if you’re rooted in that dimension which is the Source of Creation.

Right now, the simple process of living is such that, as people age, they’re becoming wounded, isn’t it? Whether someone is a success or a failure, rich or poor, or whatever, if you take off the top layer and look at them, they have so many wounds within them. They are just managing to cover it up and go on bravely in the world. But there are too many wounds. These wounds have happened simply because, whichever way you look at it, you can’t come to terms with the dualities of life. Any sensitive human being is bound to be wounded when he knows only the dualities of life, when he does not know any other dimension. Only someone who’s utterly gross can go trampling like a brute through life without knowing too much pain, but he will not be able to know the subtleties of life. But anyone who is sensitive to life is bound to be mauled by the dualities of life, always – because you are not able to separate what is good and

what is bad, what is right and what is wrong, what is evil and what is beautiful, isn't it? Are you able to draw a clear-cut line between anything, even within yourself, is it possible? You must deceive yourself to believe: "I'm okay; you're okay; everything is okay". You'll go insane after some time; you'll break down and become neurotic. Because you are trying to deceive the reality. Everything is not okay, either with yourself or with the world, isn't it? If you do a cover up job, it feels good. But after some time, it will collapse. (...) Nobody can escape from the dualities of life. Wherever you go, even if you climb Mount Everest, on the first day, you will be dazed and you will feel all pure and wonderful. By day two, your mind will come back and the whole world will come back on top of Mount Everest, yes or no? By day two, the whole world will be there with you. If people live there for three days, all the filth of the world will climb Mount Everest, yes or no?

There is a dimension in you which is not touched by the dualities of life. If you are rooted in that dimension, then wherever you are placed in life, you can go through it gracefully. (...) Indian spirituality has always used a lotus flower as symbolism. The reason is, a lotus flower grows best wherever the slush is really thick and stinky. The more stinky it is, the better it grows into a fragrant flower. (...) When you decide not to run away from the filth and not to become filth, now filth is tremendous manure, yes? The more filthy the situations you live in, the wiser and the more beautiful you can become – if you're willing; if your intelligence is functioning; if you're not reacting, but responding to life consciously. If you're reacting to filth, you will become filth, or you will try to run away from filth. If you respond to it consciously, filth becomes a great manure to produce a beautiful flower out of you, to bring out the most wonderful fragrance in you.

"I want to go to heaven; I want to go to heaven." – Why? – Because you made a hell of yourself here, isn't it? That's why you want to escape to heaven. If living here, within you, is a big heaven, why would you want to go away, what does it matter? Wherever you go, this is how it is: either you create your situations, or situations make you – these are the two ways to live.

Just see, everything that you are experiencing is physical: your body is physical; the world around you is physical; the people around you are physical; even your mind and your emotions are physical. So, spiritual means that your experience of life transcends the physical, and something other than the physical is happening.

If you really use Shiva as a tool, if you really use Shiva as a device to transform yourself, if you see the good and the evil, the beautiful and the ugly, everything is a part of him, then you would revere the ugly and the beautiful in the same way, isn't it? If you apply it the way it is intended, it will transform you tremendously.

Your rationality is coming from your identity, a very limited identity of who you are, of what you identified yourself to be. So, when your whole rationality is springing from a small identity of who you are, it is irrational, isn't it?

If you avoid death, you will avoid life also. Only that person who is willing to die can live totally; one who tries to avoid death will mentally end up avoiding life. Because what you call as *life* and *death* are not different. Right now, we can say, *right now you are living*. But we can also say, *right now you are dying*: slowly, slowly, you are dying; the process is on, and one day it will be complete, isn't it so? (...) See, only if you remind yourself of your death, you will turn spiritual. If you think of god, phantasies will come in your mind; no spirituality will come. Only when you consider your own death: "I will die one day; one day, I will be gone just like that" – now a search comes; now you will want to know: what the hell is this all about? Then, spirituality begins. Only when you become conscious, only when you're reminded of your own death, you will become a seeker – otherwise, you are just looking for more foolish nonsense in your life.

The word *linga* literally means *the form*. Please see: nothingness is the very basis of all that is something in the creation; only because there is a vast nothingness, somethingness has happened in the form of tiny galaxies. So everything springs from nothingness and goes back to nothingness. When the unmanifest begins to move towards the manifest, when the first manifestation begins, the first form which the energy takes is the form of an ellipsoid. A perfect ellipsoid is what is being referred to as a *linga*. (...) The first form is an ellipsoid; the final form before dissolution is also an ellipsoid. So, *linga* is seen as a doorway to the beyond. (...) If you form a perfect ellipsoid, if you form a *linga* the way it should be and energize it, it will be a perennial storehouse of energy. There is a whole science, which is a very essential and fundamental science, as to how to build a *linga*, the different dimensions, the different qualities we can attribute to it.

There is something within you which does not like boundaries; there is something within you constantly trying to become boundless. It does not matter where I set the boundary – the moment you feel it, you want to break it. Every expectation which gets fulfilled settles it for some time; and then again, the same thing – the moment you can feel the boundary, again it's a problem, isn't it?

People are not seeking understanding; they are seeking inclusiveness. It may even be dangerous if you understand too much.

Yoga means absolute inclusiveness. If you are inclusive, if in your relationships you include all of the other as a part of yourself, then you can enjoy all the differences.

If we are growing a garden, we are trying to focus on the flower and the fruit. It is not the flower and the fruit that we should focus on; it is the root that we need to focus on. You don't have to sit here and pray for flower and fruit – if you nurture the root, flower and fruit will anyway happen. That's so with the garden, and that's so with your life.

First thing, your life; then, everything else. Life is the most basic thing. (...) All your identities are put on; they have no existence in reality.

Begin to realize that your moods, your thoughts, your emotions have nothing to do with anybody; it's just your own madness. The madness is yours; nobody has anything to do with it. Understand that the seed of your experience is within you, not in anybody or anything else. For most people, it takes a whole lifetime, and still they don't realize it. (...) The solution is that we have to just dissolve you; there is really no other solution. (...) Once you know what is the problem, then the solution becomes easy. But when you don't know what is the problem, then there is no solution for you, isn't it – then, you will just suffer the problem.

Moving from the physical to the nonphysical means moving from the bound to the boundless. But for moving from bound to boundless, you don't have a vehicle. Right now, all that you have is physical. So you're trying to create a vehicle for yourself which is nonphysical, but which can still retain a certain form. *Ojas* is that dimension where you generate the nonphysical energy – but still, it has its own individual form. If you create sufficient *ojas* around you, your passage in this existence is well lubricated. You will see, life happens effortlessly for you; your passage is of least resistance to existence. Once you're like this, you can take wild risks in your life. (...) It is the quality, the intensity and the volume of *ojas* that makes the difference between one human being and another. Why one human being's presence seems to be so weak and has no influence even on his own life, is simply because of the kind or amount of *ojas* he carries with him. A meditator is someone who has set up a manufacturing unit of *ojas*. (...) The process of shifting life forces into a different level of manufacture, where instead of physical body cells, it begins to manufacture subtler energies, or *ojas*, is known as *meditation*.

What I see is that people who have failed in life, they are suffering their failure. And people who have succeeded in life, they are suffering their success.

Please see how much of your life has been structured around your security. Almost everything that you do is about your security, isn't it so? Please carefully examine: your education, your career, your family, your children, your emotions – everything is centered around your security somehow, isn't it? When you're constantly thinking about your security, when you're constantly concerned about your security, you will not walk full stride in your life – every step will only be half a step. You cannot let yourself go completely into the process of life; always “what will happen to me? what will happen to me?” is the question, isn't it? Until this problem is taken away, you will never realize the full potential of who you are; you will never find full expression. (...) So, *spiritual process* means, bringing another dimension which is beyond the physical into your living experience, so that this problem of security and insecurity is gone.

Irrespective of which religion, of which spiritual process, if people want to raise their energy to a certain point, first thing they will talk about is becoming monks or *brahmacharis* or *sanyasis*, because the idea is to create such a level of integrity that *this* is a whole life by itself, that it does not lean on anything else for support, either for physical well-being, or emotional well-being, or psychological companionship. It does not lean on anything; it stands by itself – because you want to take it somewhere else. If you want normal functioning, these things are

not necessary. But now, you want to become a rocket which breaks through a certain dimension of space; so now, you need to be in a different level of force and integrity – otherwise, it will crack up. So you don't want to open your body to anything, and especially opening to many partners has its own negativity in that context. (...) You're opening up your memory body, your energetic body, which is essentially ruled by memory, to a variety of memories – this will cause a whole lot of turmoil within the system.

If I say, "there is a certain integrity to my body", it means that it is strong and resistant to many things. I want you to understand the word *integrity* in that context: we are talking about integrity in terms of strength of this life. (...) This entire body that you have is essentially a certain integrity of memory; if it loses that integrity of memory, then it will become vulnerable to so many things. Now, the nature of the body is such that anything which you touch with a certain level of involvement will naturally absorb that memory – not mentally, but physically it will absorb that memory. Traditionally in this culture, we call this *runanubandha* – what this means is, physical memory that you gather. (...) Wherever you sit or stand, whatever you touch, there is memory and transaction happening all the time. (...) The idea is that you keep the memory of your body in such a way that it does not become vulnerable to other things, that you become a very integrated life. If you want to nurture yourself to become a certain possibility, then you have to maintain the memory integrity. That is what *runanubandha* means: you keep your physical memory to the minimum. Please see the advantage of keeping that memory to the minimal: if you make that memory very complex, you will see, to be at ease will become very difficult after some time, (...) because the ease will go away with excessive memory. This is not only with sexuality – there are many other things that you do like this, like hugging and touching people all the time. A sexual interaction is something where a huge amount of memory is taken from one to the other.

Until a child becomes four and a half years of age, in many ways energywise, this child is not a separate life – it's still attached to the mother's body. (...) So the energy does not mature at that time: the more memory that the child gets from the mother, the better it is to strengthen the child. But once the child begins to move out and becomes an individual, life is organizing itself. Once the child turns 21, as far as life is concerned, it has become fully separated. Generally, the course of life is considered to be approximately 84 years, or 1008 cycles of the moon. In this, the first quarter is the only time when it is connected to parentage; after that, the child must move – because energywise, you cannot connect these two lives anymore. So that is when, if you have not created enough integrity within yourself, the longing for another body multiplies. Even though the hormonal phase may be higher between 15 to 20, the longing to bind and bond with somebody increases after 21 years of age, because unknowingly, you are like a satellite who fell off the main mother. Now you want to attach to something, unless you find some integrity. This is why, between 12 and 18, one must do a lot of *sadhana* to strengthen the body, so that you don't desperately bind yourself to something or somebody. If you wish to take a partner, it must be a conscious process; if it's a compulsive process, then you will pay the price for it.

We have a biology; we cannot put it under the carpet – it's there; it's best we address it for what it is. But right now, the problem in the world is this: because certain religious institutions in the world took this attitude that the very biology of the human being is wrong, because of this, culture started hiding it under the carpet. In this culture, we never had such repression, but after the British came and left, we became more prudish than the British. But before that, if you look at our temples, you will see that the outside temple art is all pornographic. But we do not call it pornographic – we are only talking about the various dimensions of human biology, because we don't see it as wrong, but we see it as the periphery of life. If you stay there only, you will stay on the physical dimension forever – you will not explore anything else. So in the temple, you are supposed to look at that, and understand that it's the periphery of life, and make an attempt to go deeper – but at the same time, not to be in denial of it: not to glorify it or not to be in denial of it is the most important thing. (...) This cerebral capability came so that your intelligence becomes the front end of your life; and if you become conscious, your consciousness becomes the front end of your life. Biology is the front end of a bull, it's okay for him, that's all he knows – but biology should not be the front end of a human life, because you're rolling back an evolutionary scheme of putting your intelligence and consciousness in the front instead of the biology.

When you're young, in education, then first you make these instruments: body, mind, emotions, and energies. If you don't take charge of these instruments at this stage in your life, then, believe me, your own body, your own mind will trip you in so many ways right through your life: you won't ride them; they will ride you. That should not happen. At this stage in your life, let the focus fundamentally be on how to grow yourself to the best possible place within yourself. Don't be in a hurry to live; living will happen a little later. If you live too early, you will not live too well. (...) Among the mango farmers, there is a practice. If you plant a mango sapling, within twelve to fourteen months, flowering will happen when the season comes. A mango farmer meticulously removes every flower from the plant, because if you let it grow, it will bear fruit – one or two fruits will come out of this little plant. Only those which are not allowed to bear fruit up to three to four years will become full-blown trees and bear a lot of fruit; those plants which bear fruit too early will never become full-fledged trees. So a mango farmer has this wisdom: he keeps on nipping off every flower. Similarly, human beings should not be in a rush to live. The important thing is, before you try to live, you are in a place high enough, so that life will roll out well for you. If you live too early, then it could become an uphill task all your life, and many turmoils will happen.

If you want to blossom as a human being, this is the most fundamental thing that you have to understand: everything that you are and everything that you are not, is fundamentally your responsibility. Please see, with respect to all the things that you are, and all the things that you are not – only if you see: "I'm responsible", then you will explore the full depth of possibilities that you hold; otherwise, you will pass the buck to God, your parents, and other levels of irresponsibility. No; you must understand: whatever has come to you and whichever way it has come to you, what you make out of it is still yours, isn't it?

What the world throws at you is not your choice, but what you make out of it is yours, 100%.

In today's society, your identification with the body has become so strong. As you get more and more identified with the body, sex or sexuality becomes more and more important. As you become less and less identified with the body, you will see, sexuality recedes. As somebody becomes identified with the intellectual process, the need for sexuality recedes in that man. Somebody who is physically identified with the body, in him the needs are very heavy; it's always so. Where you're identified, it is through that that everything functions in you.

Self-transformation is not just about changing yourself; it means, shifting yourself to a completely new dimension of experience and perception.

In us, there is a fundamental longing for a larger slice of life which manifests through our body (sex), our emotions (love) and our mind (ambition). As a part of it, there is the longing to include someone else as a part of ourselves through a relationship, to become one with another person. Emotionally, how much ever you make this effort – you get close to that, you're almost there many moments... but the next moment, it falls down. It doesn't matter how intensely you approach it; you will see that you're almost there, and it falls apart. It gives you a taste of oneness, but never establishes you there. So love is just a vehicle – what you are really longing for is oneness. (...) Love is a vehicle which takes you close to the other bank and turns you around; it never lands you there. So, when you get sufficiently mauled by the process of life, you will be ready for grace.

If you have the right kind of eyes, everything is absolutely beautiful; if you are unhappy, some things are ugly and some things are beautiful.

Once you know Self, the other does not exist; everything is Self. When everything is Self, everything is absolutely important; there is nothing in existence which is not important.

Most people have not known involvement with life; only entanglement. (...) Wherever you are identified with something which is not you, everything sticks to you. Therefore, fear of involvement has come. But if you avoid involvement, you avoid life itself. The moment you detach yourself, your ability to experience life is gone. Where there is no involvement, there is no life, isn't it so? The deeper the involvement, the deeper the experience of life. (...) It is the identification which is causing the entanglement, not the involvement. If your involvement is beyond identification, you will see that your involvement brings absolute joy of life. (...) If you practice how not to be involved with life, then, slowly, you will become more and more lifeless as days go by – too much of mind; very little of life. As life recedes in you, you will see that nothing phantastic in you can ever happen. Only life that is exuberantly happening within you can carry you to higher possibilities.

If a knife has to cut through anything effortlessly, it's extremely important that whatever it cuts through does not stick to it. If the residue keeps on sticking to the knife, then, after some time, this knife becomes a useless knife – now, that knife, in many ways, becomes more of a nuisance than a help. Or in other words: once your intellect gets identified with one thing or the other, after that, your intellect gets chained with identifications. Once this happens, you have a completely distorted experience of the mind. Once your intellect is identified, your perception is distorted, and this distortion permeates into every aspect of your life. Our ways of thinking and feeling are so deeply identified with things we are associated with: our body, our parentage, our children, our wife, our husband, our home – not just that, with just about anything, isn't it? Once you're identified like this, it is like a mental diarrhea which is going on non-stop, endlessly. If one does not encumber one's intellect with any identifications, then every human being will naturally lead himself on to his ultimate nature. There is no other way.

The walls of self-preservation of today are the walls of self-imprisonment of tomorrow. Tomorrow, you will want to break down today's walls and build a bigger prison for yourself, isn't it so? So the longing to expand and the longing to preserve yourself are related.

If you don't know how to manage *this one*, then how are you going to manage situations around you? Only by chance, isn't it? If you manage your life by chance, you will always be freaked. (...) If you don't know how to manage *this one*, then managing the rest is always going to be accidental. If you do things accidentally, being anxious is very natural. (...) If you're not in a very pleasant state of mind, then your body and your mind will never function at their optimal level. Only when you're very peaceful and blissful, your mind and your body work at their best. And your success in this world is just this: to what extent can you harness the capabilities of this physical body and this mind? That's all that success is; it does not matter what is the nature of your activity. (...) And the most fundamental and the most basic requirement to make your body and mind work properly, sensibly, in the highest possible way, is that if you sit here, you must be in a state of pleasantness within you. Let me ask you a simple question: how many of you, in these many years of living, have had a 24-hour stretch, that is one single full day, where you did not have a single moment of irritation, hesitation, anger, anxiety, stress – nothing, you just passed through it blissfully – how many of you? Very few people can say yes to this. In all these years of living, not a single blissful day happened – I do not mean, outside; I mean, *within yourself*. (...) So if one stretch of 24 hours does not pass in utter pleasantness, then obviously, your body and your mind do not take instructions from you, isn't it? Any instrument is truly useful to you only if it takes instructions from you. (...) I would say that most human beings are functioning at 15-20% of their natural capabilities. If you could sit here, simply blissful, then in one week, you would be 100 to 200% more intelligent and sharp than the way you are right now. These days, you try to do that by taking a vacation, isn't it, yes? But if vacation is the only time when we feel pleasant, we're obviously not going to be very productive in our lives.

For people who are in positions of power and responsibility, every action, every thought, every emotion that you generate has an impact on many lives around you. Once you have taken up a position of power and responsibility, your life is no more about yourself. When you are in such a position, it's extremely, extremely important that *this one* is in a state of utter pleasantness and well-being, isn't it so? If your life is just your own nonsense, it's up to you. Once you say "I am a leader" in some place, everything that you do – the way you think, the way you feel, the way you act – has an impact on a few thousand lives. When that is so, then it becomes of paramount importance that you take care of *this one* in a completely different way – not just in terms of physical health, but much, much more than that... Right now, unfortunately, most people's well-being is so fragile that just about anybody can hijack it, just about anybody. It doesn't take some earth-shaking event to hijack your well-being, please see: anything can stress you; anything can strain you; anything can make you anxious; anything can make you disturbed; anything can make you lose your sense of joy and peace. Now, in this state, your ability to manifest who you are is not at a very high level. Unfortunately today, most people, when they use the word *human*, they always use it as a bundle of limitations. If someone says "I'm only human", he is not referring to the possibilities of being human; he is not referring to the immensity of being human – he's only referring to the limitations of being human, isn't it so? These limitations have become significant mainly because of the kind of identities that one takes on; and, above all, because even *this one* is not happening the way you want him to be. And if even *this one* does not happen the way you want him to be, it's a lost case.

If your experience of the day is not very, very pleasant, this means that you are in a steady state of turmoil, because only when you are very, very pleasant, everything works well. 70% of the ailment on this planet would disappear if people were just pleasant and happy.

Unfortunately, for many people, unless they are angry, they cannot propel themselves into action. (...) Che Guevara said: "If you're enraged, you're one of us." But propelling yourself with your joy, your love, your compassion – this is a saner way of doing things than trying to correct things with rage, going from one rage to the next rage. (...) Acting consciously or acting unconsciously – these are the two ways. (...) Do you want to propel yourself consciously or unconsciously? – This is the question.

Right now, you are handling yourself unconsciously; you are setting your energies into turmoil so many times a day. – Life does not work like that. – This is just like you getting into a car: you don't know what these pedals are for; you just kick any one of them, just the way you happen to feel – do you know what a jerky driver you will be? Right now, in the same way, your well-being is very jerky, please see this. It is not that you do not know peace; it is not that you do not know joy; it is not that you do not know blissfulness – the problem is, it's not sustainable, isn't it so? (...) Unless you do the right things, right things will not happen to you. See, this is about you. So here, it needs a different level of focus. Right now, your whole focus is outward; right now, the way you perceive life is

through the five sense organs. These five sense organs are the basis of your experience, and they are essentially outward bound.

The seed of your experience, the source of your experience, is *within you*. Have you ever experienced anything outside of yourself? Light and darkness have happened within you; joy and misery, pleasure and pain have happened within you – agony and ecstasy also can only happen within you. You have never experienced anything outside of yourself, isn't it so? So, your whole experience is happening *within you*, but your five sense organs are outward bound. So, if you have to turn this inward a little bit, if you have to have an inner faculty to focus on the inward nature of who you are, then it takes a different level of focus. If you are willing to give 24 to 40 hours of committed focus time, then we can turn on a different level of perception which is very inward – that's all it takes for you to have a simple mechanism to activate a perception which is not outward, but which is inward.

Right now, your thought process has become compulsive: it's a mental diarrhea; it's on all the time. So you think it is a non-stop thing – it is not so. If I sit in one place, four days, five days, I do not have a single thought in my mind. Because thought is an activity, isn't it? Any activity, if you wish, it must happen; if you do not wish, it should not happen, isn't it so? If you're in a compulsive state of activity and think that this state is your nature – well, that's a sad thing. Your body is an accumulation; the content of your mind is also an accumulation. What you accumulate, it can be yours; but it cannot be you. Right now, you have identified with your accumulations. If you hold a glass in your hand, and you say "this is mine"; and then, after some time, you say "this is me" – this is a very serious problem, and you need to address it. I didn't create this problem; you've been living with this problem for a long time. There is only one problem in life; and that is *you*. If you don't resolve this one problem, you're an endless problem; if you resolve this one problem, there is no other problem – there are just situations: some we can handle, some we cannot handle; that's all.

This ashram is a carefully planned situation – just to keep it sufficiently confused and not allow it to go into absolute chaos, but to allow for enough confusion to frustrate you constantly on a daily basis... It takes a lot of effort to keep this in the right level of confusion... Enough confusion to make you wonder every day "is this all worthwhile?"; never enough organization to eliminate all confusion and make everything crystal-clear... Never enough confusion to make it totally chaotic; never enough organization to eliminate confusion completely... If this is taken away, if people become too organized and too settled into their situation, there will be no spiritual quest in you anymore: you will become comfortable, settled in your own positions, established in certain types of identities. And settlement means, no movement. So, creating a place like this, every aspect of it has been carefully engineered. Maintaining a balance is a huge feat because one day, if you don't attend to it, it may go into total chaos. Or if you allow very organized people to take care of it, they will organize it so much that it becomes a corporation: it will become productive, but we will manufacture machines out of human beings. The right balance consists in managing this place with the necessary amount of confusion and disorganization, while at the same time not

allowing it to collapse. No situation collapses in Isha; but at the same time, every situation is in confusion. Only when people are thinking and looking and constantly not knowing where they belong, their ability to imbibe what is offered to them is best.

The whole spiritual process means just that you're willing to melt away your individuality to experience universality. (...) When you say, "I want to become spiritual", then you're saying "I want to break all my limitations of being individual", "I want to become unbounded".

You need to understand this: when you say, "I love Sadhguru", then your love is not for some person. When you say *Sadhguru*, that means: a dissolving agent, a catalyst to dissolve you faster.

Renunciation is not about giving up this or that – renunciation means that you have renounced your likes and dislikes; you have renounced your discriminatory process in your mind. (...) The moment you recognize what is diamond and what is mud, there is no renunciation in you. Renunciation does not mean that you give up any particular aspect of life; renunciation means that you are capable of involving with every aspect of life with the same intensity, with the same separateness. There are two ways: either you see everything as absolute nonsense, that's one way; or you see everything as sacred, that's another way. If this is sacred and that is nonsense, then you missed the whole point. If you want to live seeing everything as absolute nonsense, everything and everybody you see them as total nonsense, then you cannot live among people; you must just live alone. If you see everything and everybody as sacred, you can live among people. Either you're involved with everything totally without discrimination; or you are not involved with anything at all, including your body and your mind – these are the two ways. Both will work wonderfully; both are wonderful means – but you must choose.

If you are not fully committed to the spiritual process, you will try to escape everything that is possible within you and you will develop strategies of self-defeat against yourself. You will become self-destructive. Your whole life you can pretend, but your moment of death is a clear statement. Who you are, death makes a clear statement out of you. If you try to avoid that which is a means to your ultimate well-being, definitely you're a self-destructive person, isn't it?

Once you have enough consciousness in you to bring you to this place, once you have that much in you, now there should be no stepping back. Just push your gas pedal to the floor and keep it on for the rest of your life. There should be no let-up, no breaks – no, all the time on, you must keep it on. It needs undivided attention. What you do is not the point; how you do everything is the point.

If you're just given to this process of liking and disliking what people are doing and not doing, then surely this will push you towards insanity and destruction. Only if you have a little deeper establishment within you, if you know something a little deeper than your own mind, if you know something a little deeper than your own emotions, your own likes and dislikes, then every day you can go

through all the struggles, but still it leaves you untouched. You are not oblivious of the struggles – you are aware of the struggles; you are involved in the struggles that happen around you... but still, you go untouched. This is a very good training ground to establish your spirituality; every day, people and situations are testing you out. To be spiritual means to know something beyond this mind and this body.

When you're settled, you feel comfortable and you have a false sense of establishment. People are trying to achieve this sense of establishment by creating securities around themselves: secure families, secure jobs, secure life situations, secure social situations – you feel good. But you constantly live in the fear that one of these things will be taken away from you or will come upside down. You have probably noticed, or you yourself have gone through this: people who have been living wonderfully today, tomorrow simply because somebody died or their property went away or something else happened, you find them absolutely broken and finished, yes? Haven't you seen this again and again and again in the world, and probably you yourself have gone through this? So, this kind of establishment is not going to take you through life and beyond. The moment you say, "I'm intending to be spiritual", it means that you have long-term plans for your life. Your life plans are not just between birth and death – you're thinking beyond; you have very long-term plans about yourself. If that is so, then the most important thing is to establish at least a little bit of something in you which is beyond your body and your mind; if you don't have that, this place will be a huge suffering. So, if you are suffering, you need *sadhana*; you need inner establishment – not to fall upon somebody, not to bite at someone who is around you, not to complain about everybody around you. You must understand: you need a little more *sadhana*; you need some *inner establishment*.

We are seeking how to mutate you from one dimension to another, quickly. I would become even more drastic, much more drastic, but this is how much the social situations allow. If you go one step further, there are too many problems. So, in a certain way, I'm terribly held back, because there is an outside society which we have to face and be in tune with to make things happen here peacefully; and even this ashram has become an inside society which is not open to everything, so we have to do things carefully. I'm not a dreamer; these are the realities of life. So, to maintain this social order and the larger social order, it's a huge compromise. Otherwise, I could become a little bit more drastic, a little bit more forceful; otherwise, I could make growth a little bit more compulsory – I could make your growth so much more compulsory that you cannot escape it. Don't bring all the limitations of social living which exist in the outside society into this situation.

All your dreams are coming to you only when you don't use yourself sufficiently in your day-to-day life. If you use yourself 100% during the day, then, when your head touches the pillow, you're dead – the next thing is the peacock in the morning, isn't it? Then you simply sleep. So, when you sleep, just sleep.

When you're a critic, you're a parasite-like life; you don't have a life on your own. You're constantly looking, trying to feed on somebody else's life; this will not get you anywhere. If you're seeking survival, you can be a parasite; if you're seeking liberation, you cannot be a parasite. A child is nourishing himself on the mother; this is fine, because the child is intending to become free. But a parasite is never intending to become free: a parasite is too concerned about its survival; so it misses the possibility.

The whole process is about taking you towards an all-inclusive state, because that is the nature of the Creator. The seed of the Creator is within, and it will not rest: it will not give you a moment of rest in your life until it finds its original nature; don't you have any hopes about it. You will never know a moment of rest in your life, you will never know a moment of peace in your life, you will never know a moment of absolute ease in your life until you allow Him to find his way.

If you want to go anywhere, the first and foremost thing is that you are straight. And don't worry about the path.

In the cinema, the projection is an illusion. But if you turn out the light and if you turn on the projector, it's all real: you get involved with it; it's all real. More people on this planet have fallen in love with the two-dimensional play of light and sound than with the three-dimensional play of flesh and blood, isn't that so? (...) Somebody told you, "love thy neighbour" – if only he had told you, "love thy cinema star"; his teaching would have worked instantly... (...) But if you go and watch the greatest movie with all the lights on, the hero and heroine will not look attractive: the lights are all on. – They became so attractive only because all other things were cut off. Turning on the lights – in a way, that's what meditation is. If you simply sit here, in a while, the outside insanity plays itself out. After your outside nonsense has played itself out, you just look at *this one*. Don't go anywhere, because there is nowhere to go. There is no way for anyone to experience anything outside of himself, please see. Everything that you experience, you experience only *within you*, never outside. (...) When you have no need to go anywhere, then you are on the inward path.

The logical mind seems to come up with a lot of innovations to keep you within its own ambit, to keep you within its limitations. You understand that you exist within certain limitations, and you also understand that you have to go beyond these limitations. Many times you cross some limitations, and immediately you find the next range of limitations. You cross these mountains, the next range is ready; you cross that, and again, the next one is ready. Those of you who have actively crossed, you have seen again and again, there seem to be new mountains. Some of you like the same old mountains, up and down the same thing; that's different. So the logical intellect, if you apply it with sufficient intensity, it clearly realizes that it is not the vehicle to take you beyond. So, if you do not know how to transcend the intellect, at least frustrate the intellect. Once the intellect lies low, if you give it enough time, your true intelligence begins to function. Once that begins to function, you're naturally a blissful being; there is no other way to be. If you are not blissful by your own nature, it is very natural for you to hanker, to go somewhere. *If you see that everything is inward, that*

nothing is outward, then naturally, you will close your eyes. If you keep the gossip that you have gathered aside, and if your true intelligence begins to function, you will be blissful by your own nature; you will be willing to drop into the very abyss of nothingness.

There is no *best thing*. Whatever it is, bring clarity to it and make a decision; then, whatever you are doing, do it with total involvement – when you're on it, you're on it: just that! – Now, when you are doing that, you can't do anything else. Whatever you choose to do, if you put your heart and soul there, and make it happen, it's a great thing. – It's not the best thing, because there is no best thing in the world: trying to do the best thing is a self-defeating process; your life will go to waste. If you remain in the in-between, you will remain in a constant state of confusion, this or that. Everyday shifting, shifting, shifting – this is an endless waste of life.

If you choose to do something that you like, it strengthens your personality. Learn to do things that you don't like, and everything will break.

Most people keep repeating the same cycles in different sceneries: the scenery is different, but experientially, the same things are happening if you closely observe your life.

The *difference between astrology and spirituality* is just this: *astrology* is telling you how the cycles bind you; *spiritual process* is telling you how you can get away from the cycles. We are not denying the cycles; it would be stupid to deny them – they are definitely there. They are like waves in an ocean: either you can ride them, or you will be trashed and drowned by them. (...) If you live by being conscious of the cycles, your life will have a certain equanimity, a certain level of success, well-being and prosperity. But if you are constantly looking at how to become free from the cycles, then you are looking for your liberation. The question is: are you looking for just well-being, or are you looking for liberation? Accordingly, you must live.

The karmic structure in every human being is essentially *cyclical*. This cycle is not from lifetime to lifetime alone. If you are observant enough, you will see that events generally repeat themselves in cycles of twelve-and-a-quarter to twelve-and-a-half years. If you observe much more closely, you will see that even within a year's time, these same patterns are happening many times over. If you observe very, very closely, the same cycles are happening many times over within a day. The karmic cycle actually takes force every 40 minutes. (...) So every 40 minutes, you have an opportunity to break it. It is very important to see this. If you see that your life is just a repetitive foolish cycle, that you are doing the same cycle over and over again every 40 minutes, you would realize in two days that the way it is going is no good. If you only see the cycles once in 12 years, it will take 24 to 48 years for you to realize that this is no good. And if you see the cycles once in a lifetime, it will take a few lifetimes to see that this is no good. It all depends on how conscious you are.

There are *three ways to approach the spiritual process*. One way is, slowly, by doing the right things through a few lifetimes, you will get there. Another way is, you remain in your present circumstances, do the best you can do, keep yourself open and focused, and make yourself available to the process – in the last moment of your life, we will see that it happens. Another way is, you want to know something now; you want to break your limitations now and go beyond these limitations. Then, you should not be concerned about what is happening around you, because many things will happen that no one will approve of: society will not approve; people will not approve; your family will not approve – right now, they relate to you because you are one kind of person; if you become another kind, they will not be able to relate to you anymore. (...) Once you recognize that someone is way ahead of you, that relationship cannot be husband and wife, mother and son, this and that – it will become something else. So, in some way, whatever you used to value will be broken – either physically broken, or you will live in the same space, but still it will change. How many people in the world are ready for that?

There is a difference between *thought* and *thinking*. *Thoughts* are simply floating away, depending upon the content of your mind. *Thinking* means, you consciously think about something. How you think may be strongly influenced by the content of your mind, but still your intellect has some discretion to think beyond that if you are willing (...), to consciously think beyond your karmic limitations. When you do a certain *kriya* or *sadhana* of any kind and your thought does not facilitate this, energy may burst upwards, but your thought may go downwards. If thought and energy collide, it will create a certain amount of friction and struggle. (...) slowly, people fall back into the same old patterns. That means, they are re-establishing their ignorance, because there is no ambience for their *sadhana* to flower. If you do the practice without setting the necessary psychological ambience, it will only create health benefits; there will be no transformation. (...) If you do the practice without setting the psychological ambience, the energy will go up, but your mind will pull it down. The necessary psychological ambience will allow you to distance yourself from the karmic structure. If you do not create that psychological ambience, the content of the mind will catch up with you. (...) If you fix that every day and do your practice, transformation will be a continuous process. As long as you live, the transformation will go deeper. (...) If you give yourself to this one thing, it will take you all the way. If you set this ambience, it will take you beyond your karmic structure.

To become free from your karmic structure does not mean to forget about it. Forgetfulness is not freedom. It is important to know it, but not to be stuck with it. Being ignorant of something is not freedom; knowing it and being untouched by it is the important thing.

When we say *sadhana*, we are not talking about any particular aspect of life. We are talking about using *every* aspect of life, both internal and external, so that it is a continuous nurturing for your life. Because the very nature of a human being is such: unless there is some dynamism, some movement in his life towards

betterment within and outside of himself, he will feel frustrated. He has to keep moving to a newer and newer possibility. *Sadhana* is that which facilitates that.

Everything can be *sadhana*: the way you eat, the way you sit, the way you stand, the way you breathe, the way you conduct your body, mind and your energies and emotions – this is *sadhana*. *Sadhana* does not mean any specific kind of activity; *sadhana* means, you are using *everything* as a tool for your well-being.

Because the human way of being is not a defined process, because there's a huge possibility, *sadhana* becomes relevant. Why we are not teaching *yoga* to dogs is, because there is no possibility; their lives are fixed and defined. Human life is not defined: you can live in a small way, or you can live in a huge way; both are possible. So, to exploit all the possibilities that human life offers, *sadhana* is just a tool. *Sadhana* is just a tool, to see that all the potential which a human being carries within himself is fully exploited. That's the reason for *sadhana*.

Whether you are pleasant or unpleasant has no spiritual relevance.

Many people who follow some spiritual practices gain small capabilities, such as the ability to heal, or the ability to tell the future. But such abilities are of no spiritual consequence. (...) As a *guru*, I do not support *siddhis*: I destroy them; I am not interested in miracles. I put a halt to such capabilities right away, because if a person acquires these powers, they will no longer pursue the spiritual path: they will set up their circus, try to make some money, or acquire fame, and make a business out of it. Do not try to become a franchisee for cosmic energy; and do not try to become a miracle worker. (...) My only aim is to help you recognize the miracle of the life that you are; everything else is a distraction

What you call a human being is a collage of many things: my money, my home, my family, my relationships, my job, my position, my fame, my name, and so on. A collage means, loosely put together pieces – anytime it can collapse. If one part of the picture, somebody burns it out, then the entire collage risks to collapse. And sooner or later, at least one piece of the collage *will* fall down.

Existence gave you an individual experience: though you are really nothing, not even a speck of dust in this cosmic experience, you can experience yourself as a separate entity. If you take this individual experience too seriously and abuse it too much – your miseries, your frustrations, your depressions – then unfortunately, suicide is one consequence. But many other people are living far more miserably than the people who actually commit suicide. For any number of people who are successful, there are at least three times or four times or five times as many people who attempt suicide.

Well, when life should end, life will decide. But once a life is gone, either by ailment, accident, natural death or suicide – it doesn't matter how: once a life is left, we must just bow down, because that is the decision of a life for whatever reason; that's existence, about which you have no power. You have power to ride it – you have no power to control it; you have no power to direct it... You can only enjoy the ride of life.

Once you take a certain identity, your intellect will function only towards that; then, what is right for you, what is wrong for you – everything is dependent on how you identify.

The intellect only dissects memory data, accumulations from our environment. Consciousness means, it is a memoriless intelligence, an intelligence beyond memory. Because of our education, we make people misunderstand memory as intelligence – but intelligence is the basis of memory; memory is not the basis of intelligence.

The significance of your life will be determined depending on how much life you capture. This has nothing to do with social significance or significance in the world, which change depending on time, place and context. The profoundness of your experience is determined by how much life you have captured – not in the context of society, not with reference to somebody else, not by comparing myself to somebody else and saying that I am bigger than somebody. This is why simply sitting here and closing your eyes is so important: when you close your eyes, you shut off the world. When you sit here, what is the significance of your experience? This is determined by how much life you capture. Whether others will understand this significance, whether this significance will find expression in the world, these are subject to a variety of outside realities.

Time is a concern for us only because we have a physical body.

Your experience becomes beautiful or nasty depending upon how you react to it. The first and fundamental training you have to go through is to learn how to respond, not react. Reaction is instinctive; reaction is based on vast memory and conclusions which we have made. Response is happening out of your consciousness. So you don't avoid anything. When something outside of you does not determine the nature of your experience, that is when you are willing to take on everything. When something outside of you makes you either happy or unhappy, you will try to choose only those things which give you pleasant experiences; and you will try to shun those things which give you unpleasant experiences.

In *dhyana*, there is a distinct separation between what is you and what you have gathered in your life. Once this space is there, this is the end of suffering. Because there are only two kinds of suffering in life: physical suffering and mental suffering. Once there is a distinction between you and the body, you and the mind, this is the end of suffering. Once there is no fear of suffering, that is when you will naturally access consciousness. Now that there is no fear of suffering, you will be willing to climb any tree. It is only when there is no fear of suffering that you will walk full strides in your life. Otherwise, no matter how courageous people think they are, they will only take half a step, because the fear of suffering is always lurking in them.

People are suffering because their minds are too full. They need to come to some sense of abandon.

As long as you exist, one way or the other you are bound. If you are existing physically, it is one kind of bondage. If you leave the physical body and you exist in some other way, there is still another bondage. Everything that exists is ruled by some law. Now, *mukti* means, you have broken all laws – and they can be broken only when you cease to exist. That is ultimate freedom. Ultimately, every seeker wants to go beyond existence.

When one really looks at one's life and sees, "What is the use?" – that is exactly the thought which makes one seek *mukti*. Right now, such a depth of "What is the point?" is still not occurring to people, because people are still children: (...) they want to see this; they want to see that. (...) *Mukti* means, you want to become free from the process of life and death. Not because you are suffering – people who are suffering cannot attain *mukti*. No: you are fine, you are joyful, but you have had enough of kindergarten – now, you want to move on.

Kalabhairav means *the dark one*; that's one aspect of it. It is a deadly form of Shiva, when he went into a destructive mode, not of destroying this or that, but of destroying time. (...) If I destroy your time, everything is over. (...) When the moment of death comes, your whole many, many lifetimes play out in a moment with great intensity, and whatever pleasures and sufferings and pains that need to happen to you, will all happen, in a moment, with the kind of intensity that you cannot hold. This is called as *Bhairavi Yatana (ultimate suffering)*, an intense process of obliterating lifetimes of *karma* in a moment. (...) If suffering has to end quickly, we must make it super intense; then only, it will end quickly. If it is mild, it goes on and on forever.

You do not do things for the body after death; it doesn't make any sense. It it were for the body, we would have done the process while the person was still alive. *Kalabhairava Karma* is about that bubble of memory that is still floating around and seeking another body.

Doing something for the departed is one thing; doing the same thing with oneself, when the engine is running, is another thing. If you want to release this thing when it is still running, it takes a different level of discipline. If you show such discipline in everything that you do with your life – that you are not clumsy, you are alert to every small thing, then you can do *Kalabhairava Kriya*. After that, when you leave, no one has to do anything for you. It will be definitely a great thing to do in one's life, a fantastic thing to do for oneself. But it will need a sense of discipline, which is a very scarce material in today's world.

Traditionally, they say, if you do *Kalabhairava Kriya* for yourself, then you cannot go back to your home or village and live a social life – you have to live the rest of your life away from any community, like an outcast. It is not that this person is an outcast; they just no longer belong there, because they have created a genetic distance. They have got nothing to do with the family or the community, because it is over for them.

In a way, the whole process of becoming meditative is a simulation of death. Death means, the body is no more a problem, and there is no discerning intellect. Your discernment is a product of past experience and impression.

Intellect functions always with a certain identity. If you have no identity, you cannot use your intellect. With individual identities, if you apply your intellect, it will split the world into many pieces.

Sense organs can only perceive in comparison/by contrast. If there is no comparison, your senses are useless. Because there is darkness, you know what is light – otherwise, you would just not know what is light. Because there is silence, you know what is sound – if there was no silence, you would not have the idea of what is sound. So, you perceive always in comparison. It is like this... Let's say, you're six feet tall: now, you walk like a tall man; you think like a tall man; you feel like a tall man – you *are* a tall man. Then, you go to another country where everybody is eight feet tall: suddenly, you walk like a short man; you think like a short man; you feel like a short man – you *are* a short man. So what you perceive in comparison is a distortion of reality; it is not reality as it is. So whatever we perceive in comparison is useful for our survival process. But if we want to know the nature of this existence, sense organs are not sufficient instruments. If you want to know the nature of existence, if you want to know the fundamental laws or *dharma* which governs life, the way it happens within us and around us, then you need an inner perception or another dimension of intelligence within you. Otherwise, you will only cut the world into pieces. Intellect is essentially a knife which cuts; it can only dissect. By dissection, you may come to know some components, but you will not know the being in any sense – you will lose it completely. It is only out of profoundness of experience, by turning inward, that you can know life.

The five sense organs are always outward. The moment you dedicate yourself to your intellect, you also get enslaved to the limitations of your five senses. In this context, the wisdom of the East is of tremendous significance to the world, because it has transcended this slavery to sense perception and learned to perceive life in a completely different way.

As the comforts and conveniences increase on the outside, as there is less to complain about what is happening around you, the emptiness of within echoes within you in a horrible way. When you're struggling for survival, you will not realize this. When outside is well settled, that is when you see how hollow life has become. The biggest question in the world – you will see in the next few decades – is: what the hell are we doing here anyway?

By its nature, the intellect needs a strong identity, a strong sense of who I am, a strong sense of belief. This is when your intellect will function in a certain way. If you take away the identity of the intellect, it will not know what to do.

Chitta is a dimension of intelligence which is unsullied by memory: if you touch this dimension, then the memory has no influence on you. Then, your genetic memory, your evolutionary memory, your conscious memory, subconscious memory, whatever kinds of memory you have – it has no influence on you. Or in other words, past cannot recycle itself through you. (...) This dimension of intelligence which is called as *chitta*, which is untouched by any kind of memory, just pure intelligence, is of significance because it is *beyond* – it is beyond your species; it is beyond your form; it is beyond your gender; it is beyond your culture; it is beyond every kind of influence which is essentially memory within you. As long as memory is playing out, what it means is: in India, we say, you are in a state of *samsara*. *Samsara* means, a *cyclical life*: you're in cycles of life – that means, you're not getting anywhere. A cycle is nice; it gives you good exercise. This is like running on a treadmill: if you're seeking exercise, it's good; but if you want to go somewhere, it's no good. (...) As long as you're functioning within the first three dimensions of intelligence, you're in a cyclical mode. It is alright to exercise yourself, but it is not good to go somewhere. So, if you want to transcend the *samsara* nature of who you are, or the cyclical nature of your existence, then you touch the dimension of intelligence which is referred to as *chitta*. Only that which does not come from your individual identity or individual memory, this can be truly universal. So for this, we say: this is *sanathan dharm*. *Sanathan dharm* means the ultimate law of nature.

Have you ever experienced anything outside of yourself? – In the very nature of things, you cannot experience anything outside of yourself. (...) When everything, when the entire experience of life is caused from within you, at least it must happen the way you want it, isn't it?

Most of humanity is only concerned about “what will happen to me?”, which means “will I suffer?” – that's the question. The first and foremost thing, if you truly want to explore dimensions which we are referring to as another dimension of wisdom or knowing, is that first you must determine the nature of your experience, so that you have no fear of suffering. Only then, truly exploring human consciousness becomes a reality; only then, touching dimensions of intelligence which give access to the entire universe becomes a possibility.

Can somebody push you into a depressive state or a manic state, or even towards suicide? Can someone else push you off the brink? – Yes, if you are on the edge. See, if you're on the edge of the cliff, somebody can push you off with a finger. If you're three steps away, they need both their hands. If you're ten steps away, it takes two people to drag you. If you're far away, then there are no more chances of falling off – the cliff doesn't even arise in your life, isn't it? So, the question is: where are you standing right now? Are you established in that aspect of you which I would refer to as “the seat of your experience”? If you're established there, in control, nobody ever can drive you crazy; it is simply out of question. But if you're not established there, then yes – situations and people can push you into very complex and difficult mental situations.

You've never realized how many dimensions there are to your mind. The human mind is a building with a million rooms; every room, different kind. You may have created safety and security for your life in such a way that you just live in one room. If you enter the next room, you will be surprised – it doesn't even feel like you. If you enter a new room every day, then you will know: all the nonsense that you thought, that you are, just is absolute rubbish, because you made up everything for the sake of convenience. Because human mind is not a small possibility. (...) But now, if you are unconsciously pushed into new rooms, that is called as "psychological problems". Can someone push you into a new room? Yes, they can. But if you are firmly established in the seat of your experience, where your experience is generated, if you are in charge of that, then nobody can push you anywhere. Then, somebody else cannot determine the nature of your experience. (...) The nature of your experience alters itself depending upon how you react to somebody else. (...) If your ability to respond is hundred percent in your hands, nobody else can determine what happens within you. Everything becomes available to you all of the time, and you don't need anyone's cooperation for this – this is freedom. You don't need anyone's cooperation for you to be joyful, for you to be loving, for you to be compassionate, for you to be ecstatic. You don't need anybody's cooperation, because human experience is essentially caused from within.

Karma is the tax of life; it gathers. (...) If you avoid activity, after a few days, you will understand that you have no access to life, in so many ways. So, either willingly or unwillingly, you pay the tax. (...) How much the tax gathers depends on how you do it. See, the misery of last year's tax, you can carry it into this year. (...) *Any unconscious talk in your head will generate karma, because unconsciousness is the basis of karma.* It is in your unconsciousness that you have arrived at what is good, what is bad, what is right, what is wrong, what is up, what is down – this has happened because you are not conscious.

Inclusiveness is not an idea; inclusiveness is the way existence is. You may reject the person who is sitting next to you, but you are inhaling what they are exhaling. The same bubble of air which we call "the atmosphere" has been around for millions of years, same air; (...) only your mind is a sanatorium – no ideas of inclusion are coming. (...) If you are in tune with life, you will be naturally inclusive; if you are living in your sanatorium, then you will be exclusive.

A *mantra* has no meaning. (...) Meaning is a made-up thing – it's a psychological process; it has no existential relevance.

Brahmacharya does not mean celibacy. *Brahman* means *the ultimate*; *charya* means *the path*: you are on the path of the ultimate – that is *brahmacharya*. Celibacy is only talking of the physical aspect of holding yourself back from a natural urge which is going on in the body, and more in the mind. (...) If you don't feel steadily peaceful and joyful, then you will go after something. You will naturally get entangled in compulsive activity. A *brahmachari* is somebody who is working towards organizing his energies in such a way that to be peaceful and joyful is all his own, that his joy, his love, everything that he needs, is within

himself – he is not going to lean on anybody for that. (...) *Brahmacharis* need support; they need atmosphere to make that happen for themselves. It's not a small task that they have taken up. (...) So *brahmacharya*, on one level, means to move from a compulsive human being to a conscious human being.

You come to me and say, "Sadhguru, I'm a confused soul". – See, a soul cannot be confused; what you are is a confused mind.

Soul, God, heaven – don't talk about things which are not in your experience. If you talk about it, you will satisfy yourself with gossip, and the real thing will never happen to you. You will be fulfilled with gossip. Gossip is a very fulfilling thing, you know. A lot of people avoid reality just by gossiping. A whole lot of people avoid reality just by watching a cinema. I'm not against it. If you're using it to enhance your life, it's okay, but if you're using it to avoid your life, then it's a serious problem, isn't it?

Mind can only be confused. If someone has a clear mind, he must be a fanatic or a single-track idiot – and there's not much of a difference between the two. The nature of the mind is confusion; it's always confused, because it can't figure out anything. But it can gather everything and mull over it endlessly... (...) If you can handle your confusion consciously, mind is a very productive instrument. If you're looking for a mind which is not confused, you can go for a brain surgery: remove half of the brain, there will be no confusion – everything will be clear. The more intelligent you are, the more you will wonder, the more you will be confused about everything. The more profoundly you look at life, the more confused you will be. (...) You have to learn to use the confusion for your benefit. If your mind is not confused, this means that it is not constantly receiving – it is a blocked-up mind, a dead block which is dead sure about everything. The natural mind is always confused, because it is always receiving so much more than it can ever process. If you're constantly confused, that means you have a functioning intelligence.

You can become life and know life, but you can never figure out life in your mind. Right now, you are a bundle of thoughts, emotions, ideas, opinions and prejudices. That is more dominant than the life in you, isn't it? Your thought and emotion is occupying more space than the aliveness that you are. So you are not experiencing yourself as a piece of life; you are experiencing yourself as a bundle of thought and emotion and whatever else. This is a wrong perception.

If one's thought is so focused towards one thing in his life, that nothing else seems to matter, then such a person is free simply because of his thought. Not a confused thought process – a confused thought process will not protect you. But if one's thought is like this, that it is absolutely connected to one thing and one thing only, a focused thought, such a thought can give you a lot of protection and a lot of purpose and a lot of capability – that's a different thing. But right now, you are not in that state; it is better to use a simple tool. (...) The protection should be such that only that which is not necessary for you is filtered. You need a filter, not a wall. If you build a wall around you, then even life won't touch you.

Don't become like that. Even if life smothers you, it is better than to remain untouched by life.

You have become so much identified with the thought process that this identification has obliterated your experience of life. You are misunderstanding your psychological drama as life, isn't it? When it's badly directed, people suffer it; when it's well directed, people enjoy it, isn't it? You are experiencing the accessories, but you are not experiencing life. Tell me, how many times have you looked at something beyond thought? (...) Your psychological drama is yours; you can play it – nothing wrong with it. It's like we start playing a game of tennis. You hit the ball, you enjoy it; you hit the ball, you enjoy it... but after some time, you keep the racket down and you go home, isn't it? Right now, with the psychological game, you are not able to stop. Just imagine, if you couldn't stop playing tennis, twenty-four hours, how you would suffer the game of tennis. That's all that is happening right now. Your psychological process has become unstoppable; it's simply on and on and on. So the simplest solution for this is – don't try to stop it, because you're not trying to stop kidneys and liver and heart and whatever else that's happening; you're all fine with that. Only with brain function you have a problem, because of the identification you have. You have misunderstood your thought to be you, isn't it? But your thought is coming from a certain information that you have gathered from outside. If I wipe out all the memory in you, there will be no thought. (...) What goes into you as information is not in your hands, simply because everything that you sense through five sense organs is just getting into you and getting recorded. There is no good, bad, ugly in this; it's just information. Now, by your recognition, you say "oh, this is nice", and it becomes good; you say "oh, this is nasty", and it becomes bad; you say "oh, this is horrible", and then it becomes ugly. This is *your* doing. (...) We have gotten identified with the thoughts that we generate, with the emotions that we create, not understanding that it's our prerogative to create the kind of thought we want, the kind of emotion we want. Right now, our own intelligence has turned against us. The problem is just that we have lost control over our psychological drama. Because existence is not in our experience, our psychological drama is like a cloud blocking up the sun. Instead of living in the Creator's Creation, we are living in our own petty creation – that's the big thing.

There are certain things you will know only by plunging in. (...) Logic is not going to get you there. All the logic step-by-step that we build and which makes you feel that it's almost going to the moon, is just to make you confident enough, crazy enough, to plunge. There is not much difference between confidence and being crazy – it's just that confidence means that you're trying to do a logical explanation through your madness.

If you do not learn how to hold everything at a distance and still be absolutely involved with it, you will not hit the juice; you will hit only the peel. If you make it too important in your mind, you are going to get entangled with it; if you consider it not important and disregard it, you bypass life.

How much ease is there in you? That is the level of attention which you will have.

The basis of fear is your physicality. If you were not physical, would you have fear? No. It is the limitations of the physical which cause fear. If you were not at all physical, you would not be fearful of anything, isn't it? (...) Transcendence, enhancing the spiritual dimension of who you are, so that you become less physical, leads to a state of fearlessness. If you are not so physical, there is not much fear in you.

There are two ways to be free of thieves, if you are afraid a burglar may come into your house and steal. One way is to put a guard outside. Another way is not to have anything, and nobody will come: then, even if you invite the burglar, he won't come; he will go somewhere else. (...) If you still have stuff, you want a guard.

The peak is not in what you're doing outside; the peak is in the way you experience it, isn't it? Somebody can do something very small with very profound experience; somebody can do a big thing without any sensitivity to what is happening within him and around him. (...) People can sit in a palace and be depressed; people can sit on the street and be on the peak – that is possible. (...) Everybody is running after education, money, marriage, children, power – essentially, what should happen within you, you are trying to cause it from outside. (...) All human experience comes from within you, isn't it? (...) Things which are most vital to you, the profoundness of your experience, the pleasantness of your experience, must be on self-start – but right now, it's all on push-start. Right now, if you want to be happy, how many people do we have to fix in this world? If you want to be peaceful, we have to fix the *entire* world. So, there is an endless amount of conditions for *your* experience to be in a certain way. And in pursuit of human well-being, we've turned the place upside-down; we ripped the planet apart. We are definitely the most comfortable generation ever, but we are not the most joyful generation. Our daily survival is organized, but: are we joyful? No. Are we peaceful? No. So, our experience of life is still about the same as the caveman's experience was. Same anxiety: "where's my food?"; "where's my next apartment?" – it's not different. It's rudimentary, isn't it?

You can only do what you *are*. If you feel very pleasant right now, you will think of doing pleasant things to everybody around you. If you're feeling unpleasant right now, you will naturally do unpleasant things to people, isn't it? So, before you embark on success, before you embark into the world, before you touch another human being, how you keep yourself, to make *this one* utterly pleasant, is a fundamental responsibility. Before you touch another life, you must make *this* life a very pleasant process. Then, whatever you touch, you touch in a pleasant manner. If you make *this* unpleasant for some reason, whatever will be your reason, you will naturally spread unpleasantness in the world.

A soldier should understand: the fight is not yours; you are fighting *our* fight. And when you fight, when you hit the enemy, it should be death, not injury, because you are not a police force; you are a fighting force on the border, fighting only with those forces which threaten the nation. So you must be effective; you should not be fluffy with philosophy. (...) Like Arjuna, you're a warrior, you're on the

battlefield, and now your head is fluffed with philosophy – this is not gonna work. Your actions have to be relevant for the situation in which you exist. It is very important to understand: there is an *existential situation*, there is a *psychological and emotional situation*, and there is a *social situation* – these are all not the same things. Until human beings learn to hold hands and to live together joyfully, we have to manage the practical as it should be.

A fighting force is not a normal kind of social situation where we can sit down and debate about everything. Once a leader says something, others, whether it makes much sense to them or not, sometimes they just have to do it, because there are situations in our life, when we are in intense activity, where there is no room for debate. Debate should happen elsewhere; there cannot be a debate on the battlefield. So officers have to be at a certain level of command and force; otherwise, those situations won't work. But if you try the same method everywhere, it won't work either.

Integrity means that your intentions are not about your well-being; your intentions have become larger than personal – it's always about the larger well-being.

If you sit on a perch and you cannot see any better than those who are down there, if you don't see things clearly, then you will become an object of ridicule. So, it is very important that a leader must develop insight.

Inspiration is very, very needed, especially in a fighting force. Without inspiring the men, you cannot do the type of activity that is expected of a soldier. As a leader, it is not by words that you can inspire people. If this inspiration has to happen, it's not just about inspiring words; nobody's going to listen to those words. The important thing is that you live in such a way, that you burn with such intensity, that people cannot help but catch fire and be intense along with you.

Trying to be humble may make you very pretentious; it is better you have pride in what you are doing. When you have pride in what you are doing, about what you do and how you do it, it takes care of you. – If you just understand that we are just a tiny speck of life, (...) that we are a small pop up, and we will pop out, one way or the other; if we understand the context of the time that we occupy here as human beings, the space that we occupy here as human beings, and who we are; if we are just conscious about this – then there is no need for humility; you will be fine. (...) We don't need humility, and we don't need arrogance; both are not needed. Why can't we just handle life as it is necessary?

We are *mortal*; this life is *mortal* in nature – you cannot just think that you are going to live forever. A time comes when you must be ready to ease your way through. You must understand: you come at a certain time, and you go at a certain time. We don't want an untimely death, but when the time is up, we must be willing to go. If we're not willing to go, we will definitely make it miserable for ourselves; or if our children and families are not willing to let us go, that will also make it miserable. So it is extremely important that we should have handled both

life and death with a certain wisdom, understanding the context that we are not here for good. (...) Our time here is very limited, and how we use this time is important. Life's quality is not going to be enhanced by simply stretching it by another few months, or a year or two; it's not going to happen. (...) If you are observant of the life forces within you, you will see when life is not wanting to revive itself. You don't have to ask a doctor; if you just observe your own life forces, you will know when they are winding up. (...) Death is the last act that we perform in our life; it is important that we die well. (...) There is nothing morbid about our mortality; that is the fundamental reality of our existence. Only if we are conscious of this reality will we plan and enact our life in as beautiful a manner as possible.

You just fix this one thing: as long as your volition is inclusive, as long as everybody's well-being is included in your intention, you don't worry about right and wrong – just do what is appropriate to a given situation.

I feel that accepting failure is a dangerous process. You can learn from your failure, but I would say, it is better not to fail. If you're in the armed forces, failure may mean death; you can't learn after that.

The most precious thing in our life is life itself; there's nothing else we have. We may think we have many things – but it's all psychological stuff. Right now, somebody thinks he has this and that – if we just fade his memory a little bit, everything disappears. So, the only thing that you have is *life*. Keep this in the highest possible way, in the most exuberant and effulgent way; then, no matter what life throws at you, you will know what to make out of it. What life throws is not always our choice; what we make out of it is one hundred percent our choice. If you are exercising this choice always, you are a successful human being, because then, you will know how to be. (...) The success of this life is that you know how to be. If you know how to be, you will keep yourself in a most fantastic state of experience, because profoundness of experience is the most important thing. Right now, whatever is your idea of success, you think it will bring profoundness of experience. Somebody thinks it's money; somebody thinks it's wealth; somebody thinks it's a drug; somebody thinks it's love; somebody thinks it's knowledge; somebody thinks it's pleasure – but essentially, you are seeking profoundness of experience. Once you know how to sit here with a very profound experience of life, you are a successful human being. What we do in the world is according to the times in which we exist. (...) What we do is not all ours; it is a consequence of the times in which we exist. But 'successful human being' means this, that you know how to be.

Whether it's our career, or our business, or our relationships, we are trying to milk happiness out of it. The moment you attempt this, life will turn against you over a period of time, because that's how it works. We must understand: human experience essentially comes from within us, whether it's pain or pleasure, misery or joy, agony or ecstasy. If we understand this, if we take charge of this, if we take charge of the seat of experience within ourselves, what experience would we cause to ourselves? Definitely the highest level of pleasantness. See, if you being joyful and loving is not enslaved to anybody, if you are joyful and

loving by your own nature, then every relationship will work well; whatever sort of relationship you make, everything will work well. Whatever is your career, or your business, or your activity in the world, you will do it to the best, because only when you are in a pleasant state of experience, your body and your mind will work at their best. (...) Without getting your body and your brain to function according to your needs, you will not be successful; you will only be successful sometimes, by default or accident. That is not a good success, because that success creates anxiety. It is very important that your success is rooted in your competence; it is very important that your success is figured out in your mind. If this has to happen, it's very, very important that you are in a pleasant state of experience; that is: there may be many problems and issues outside, but *you* are never the issue in your life. I know there are many issues, for everybody there are, but *you* should never be the issue. This one thing you must take care of. Right now, the problem is, in most human beings' lives, their own thoughts, their own emotions are the greatest impediments that they are facing. (...) This is the whole science of inner engineering, to make sure that *you* are not the problem in your own life, never ever. (...) There are various situations; and we will do everything to the extent that we can: what works, works; what doesn't work, doesn't work – but *this one* is never the problem. This is something everybody must do. This is our mission, to make sure that human beings are not tripping on their own feet.

There is genetic memory; there is evolutionary memory; there are conscious and unconscious levels of memory – so this whole body is memory. So, what you call as myself, this whole framework of a human being, is a consequence of a certain amalgamation of memory. So these memories are allowing you to function; this is your *karma*. Without this memory, you wouldn't know one thing from the other. So, *karma* is not a concept; *karma* is not a punishment and reward system. But it is like this: you build a karmic stage on which you are supposed to do your drama, but if your karmic stage is not firm, if it is like quicksands, you try to dance on it, but you will sink into it. This is all the problem is: your *karma* is not conscious; it is happening simply in a compulsive and instinctive manner. (...) if you were any other creature, then you functioning instinctively, compulsively, reactively, would be alright. But once you become human, you are supposed to function consciously and intelligently. For any human being, this is important in every aspect of life: *karma* is not a problem; you *exist* because of your *karma*. You don't suffer because of your *karma*; you suffer because you react to the *karma* – you're reacting to your own *karma*, or you're reacting to somebody else's *karma*; and it is in reaction that you suffer. Suffering is a psychological reaction to either our physical situation or the social situation around us. So *karma* is not the problem; *karma* is vital for your existence. (...) *Karma* means, you're doing it; *karma* means action. When you say, *my life is my karma*, you are admitting *my life is my making*; this is the most dynamic way to exist. Do not make it fatalistic. If you say, "it's my making", you can fix it; if you say, "it's God's making", you cannot fix it – that's a big difference.

How many balls can you juggle? If you enhance your activity without enhancing yourself, then activity will cause misery.

If you get divorced, you suffer; if you remain married, you suffer; if you get fired, you suffer; if you stay with the job, you suffer; if you can't go to school, you suffer; if you have to go to school, you suffer – so what is the problem? The problem is *this one* – not the wife, not the boss, not the world, whatever they may be. They may be anything – but whether I suffer or don't suffer is essentially with me. (...) *My life is my karma*: the wife is somehow; the boss is somehow; the world around you is somehow, all kinds of nuisance happening – but I keep *this one* the way I want. (...) So what the world does to you, what people do to you, this is how it is; what you do to yourself, that is in your hands – this is your *karma*.

A *yantra* literally means a machine. A machine is a combination of very purposeful forms. If you make some forms very purposefully and assemble them together, it becomes a machine. A *yantra* is a form, simple or complex, towards a certain purpose. A combination of *yantras* becomes a larger *yantra*, a larger machine. (...) it is possible to perform different types of activities better with specific machines for those activities. (...) *Yantras* can be of a physical form or energy form; both may function a little differently, but they do function towards the same goal. (...) In earlier times, the process of building temples was fundamentally to create powerful *yantras* for everyone. Temples were powerful *yantras* that the whole town could benefit from.

One of the main things that does not allow a human being to find his full potential is friction. Friction need not necessarily mean that you get into a fight with someone. But when you try to be active in a big way, it builds up around you. How low friction levels are kept determines how far you will endure. If friction increases, you will want to stay away from activity, or you will get into one big mess. It does not matter how important a certain goal is for you, if friction happens every day when you step out and try to do something, you will slowly develop an aversion to that very dear goal of yours. I would say, 80% of human beings have hugely curtailed the possibility of what they could do in their life simply because they cannot deal with the friction they naturally generate when they get into brisk activity. It is not a very smart way to deal with it, because instead of bringing lubrication, you are keeping the engine off. We have created the *Bhairavi Yantra* for those who want to lubricate their actions with the Grace of the Devi, so that you can take up things and not get into friction. Her Grace will take care of that.

Mantra is sound; *yantra* is form. The science of using *mantra* and *yantra* is called *tantra*.

All deities are also referred to as *yantra*.

Very sophisticated tools were created to take you into spaces that you yourself would not be able to go. So these are machines in a completely different dimension.

Tantra is an inner technology. (...) It is not any different from *yoga*; it is a limb of *yoga* called *tantra yoga*. (...) The compulsive and cyclical nature of the body and mind render themselves a barrier for higher possibilities. *Tantra* is to go beyond, so that compulsiveness of the body and mind does not keep us trapped in our limitations. It is about learning to use the body, not as oneself, but as a stepping-stone to deliver this being to the highest possible dimension.

Of the different energy manifestations in the body, referred to as the 114 *chakras*, spilling from the top three is considered the highest. If you have to build up to this, every basic instinct, including the sexual instinct, emotions, intellect and survival process must be used to build and hype the energy system. The intention is to deploy all instincts for which a certain amount of energy is dedicated in the body. If one goes into an actual sexual act, the build-up and the purpose of it will be lost. This is a path that needs extreme discipline, a kind of discipline which is not possible for most people to even attempt.

Tantra means, you are able to use your energies to make things happen. If you can make your mind razor sharp to cut through everything, this is also one kind of *tantra*. If you make your energies work upon your heart to become utterly loving and you can burst forth with enormous love that just overwhelms everyone, this is also *tantra*. If you make your physical body enormously powerful to make it do incredible feats, it is also *tantra*. Or if you can make your energies do things by themselves, without employing the body, mind or emotion, this is also *tantra*.

Life is not telling you that if you finish one thing, you must do the next thing. You are doing it because otherwise, you would be lost. If you don't do anything, you would be completely lost, isn't it? If you don't have a job to do, you develop some hobby; you have to do *something*, because without doing, you're lost. Right now, because your way of being is not established, who you are has come to you only because of your doing, isn't it? Now, only because there is a being, doing has become possible. But your being is not in your experience; only doing is in your experience. Hence, desperate action – if you want to feel like somebody, you have to act; you have to do many things. No, that's not the right way to live. You do something because the situation demands it. If the action is coming because *you* need it, it's a desperate action, isn't it? You're constantly in desperate action. To make yourself feel substantial, you have to act – that means, all that activity is coming from a certain feeling of insufficiency, isn't it? Somewhere, the way you are right now is not sufficient; you have to *do something* to feel a little better. But once you get used to that little better state, that feels insufficient too; then you have to do something more to feel a little better. This insufficiency has come simply because your whole experience of life is limited to the physical. Right now, humanity is in desperate activity. Fortunately, 50% of humanity is lazy – if the 6 million people would become very industrious, this planet would be finished in no time, isn't it so? Isn't it unfortunate? It's the lazy of the world who are saving the planet. The intelligent of the world should save the planet, isn't it? This planet should be well because of human intelligence, not because of their lethargy. But right now, it's the lazy who are saving the planet. So much of human

activity is so destructive, but those who do can't stop, because if they stop, they are feeling insufficient.

There are four ways of *yoga* that I am talking about. You want to do your own thing, 100%, you don't want to depend on anybody: this is *kriya*. You want to take a roadmap and go: *gnana*. You want to follow somebody else's bus: *karma*. You just want to sit in somebody else's bus and you don't mind not being a driver: *bhakti*. What are you ready for right now? You must see that. Otherwise, you will sit in somebody else's bus and you will want to drive it – that won't be good; that won't work. Before you settle down in the backseat on somebody else's bus, you should exhaust all other aspects.

With whatever perception that you have, you can only see that much, so it looks all like that. If you look deeper into it, you would see, your way of functioning within yourself creates so many things in the universe – it's not the universe which is making you; it is you who is making the universe in many ways, in *many* ways. Always in this culture, they have gone about saying, "*This is a mini-cosmos by itself*", and all these things you've heard. This is not just being said as symbolism; this is a reality: if you turn inward, *this* is a cosmos by itself. So if *this one* becomes conscious, suddenly it will start creating the way it wants, and life will shift from one level to another.

You can never have an outside world exactly the way you want it; nobody can. But you can have an inside world the way you want it.

Desire *is* life – they are just two different words, but the same energy, isn't it? Without desire, there is no possibility of life. I want you to understand this: your very life energies *are* desire; that's why life is clinging to the body. (...) When natural death happens, your life energies lose that intensity of vibrance, or in other words: desire as a moving force slowly ebbs down. If life energy loses its desire to hold on to the body, that's death. So what you call *life* or what you call *desire* are just two different names for the same thing. But what objects you offer to your desire is according to your exposure to life.

Right now, whatever happens around you, your mind is in a state of compulsive reaction. When I say, what is around you, I mean your body too, because your body is something that you gathered around you, isn't it so? (...) Become more conscious, and suffering will dissolve. So, you don't try to stop something. You see to it that you become more conscious, so that everything in you becomes more and more a conscious process.

Everywhere there are situations – situations, situations, situations. We have not come to the situation yet. I'm talking about the moment. *The moment is the building block of the situation, isn't it so? So first, we are looking at the brick; first, we are learning to handle the brick.* If you don't learn to place the bricks properly, your building is going to crash on your head. So, first, let's see that this moment is inevitable, and let's see what it does.

If you have to experience anything, everything is obviously in this moment, isn't it? The past and the future are both revealed in *this* moment.

The word *yoga*, or what has traditionally been referred to as *mukti* or liberation or kingdom of God, it simply means: dissolution from the bondage of the physical. As long as you have a karmic body, naturally you seek a physical body. Now, if you are seeking liberation, what it means is that you want to destroy the karmic body, so that the seeking of the physical body is finished – what you call as myself is finished.

Everything that you are right now, it is just what you have done with the inputs that came to you. What you are is not because you are placed here or there; you are what you are because of what you have made of yourself within yourself. The past *karma* is essentially determining how you experience what is happening around you. You can live in a palace and be absolutely miserable, and you can live in a slum and be joyful, isn't it so? So, what happens within you, how you experience your life, is essentially the quality of your life, isn't it? The texture of your clothes or the ambiance of your house do not decide the quality of your life, please know this. *Karma* determines how you experience your life. If you have written a joyful software for yourself, everything is joyful for you; if you have written a miserable software for yourself, everything is miserable for you. And irrespective of the software, right now, you can make yourself either joyful or miserable if you're willing, isn't it so? So *karma* is not a deciding factor – it is merely creating certain tendencies; it is moving your life in a certain way. If you become a little conscious, you don't have to go by these tendencies; you can go where you want to go.

Whatever you accept, from that you are free; whatever you do not accept, in that you are entangled; please see, please look at your life and see. Whatever you accept, from that you are free; whatever you do not accept, that is what you are battling with, isn't it? Acceptance does not mean lying down and accepting your life whichever way it comes, no. Only if you accept, you can create; the basis of action is acceptance. Otherwise, you're just a series of reactions, please see. And when you react to something or somebody, you are enslaved to that something or somebody, isn't it so? Do you want to live joyfully, have you decided? You living joyfully is not happening because you are a series of reactions to many things around you. Anybody can hijack your peace; anybody can hijack your happiness any moment, isn't it so?

The nature of the mind is such that if you say, "I don't want that", then *only that* will happen. (...) Your mind is just society's garbage bin. Everybody who comes this way stuffs something into your head and goes, isn't it? If you say, "I don't like this person", that person will stuff more into your head than anybody else. Especially if you don't like the person, what that person said will remain more in your mind than what all the loved ones have said, isn't it? (...) So, people are talking about a pure mind – they don't know anything about the mind; the mind is a garbage bin. It is just that, if you maintain a little distance from that, now you are a pure being, because you're not infected by the process of the mind – you know how to *use* the mind. Now, there is nothing wrong with a garbage bin;

actually, a garbage bin is the most useful thing in a house. But suppose that tonight, you decide to sleep in it – then it becomes a horror. That's what is happening right now. A garbage bin is very useful if you know how to open it and shut it as you want. But right now, you are not able to switch off the mind – this means, you are sitting in the garbage bin. – You have to get out of it; you have to create a distance between you and your mind. So, what *Shambhavi* means is, it creates a distance, or: you're out of your mind, that's all it means. (...) If somebody says, "you're out of your mind", don't you feel insulted – it is the highest compliment! They are saying, "you're a *buddha*"... (...) You can only be mad if you are in the mind; if you're out of the mind, you're perfectly sane. 100% sanity will come to you only when you are out of the mind. As long as you are in the mind, you are insane – maybe in a socially accepted way, so you're going on.

Why a Socrates is poisoned, why a Jesus is crucified, why a Mansur is stoned to death, is simply because, suddenly among all the insane people, one man is talking too much sanity, too much sense – it's an offense. Just by truth and sense, people are scared. In the whole lot of insanity you are settled into, one person comes and talks utter sanity: it's scary, and it's an offense. Somewhere, you have to admit that you lived your whole life without knowing the fundamentals; you lived your whole life in a stupid manner – you have to admit it. Usually, societies chose to kill those men. And persecution has not stopped. Nowadays, they don't hang you on the cross – they let loose the tax man and the police man and so many others, or the press. It has not stopped. You just state the truth, and everybody will get offended.

See, where is the need to identify yourself with something? In the society, yes. If for social reasons, we identify ourselves with something or the other, that's fine. But within yourself, where is the need to identify yourself with anything, for that matter? Where is the need? Because you feel insufficient in some way – that is why you are trying to identify yourself with something or the other. Your experience of who you are is not sufficient – that's why you gather knowledge, create a family, engage in a career; that's why all this nonsense is happening. Now, if the experience of who you are is magnificent and complete, the need to identify with anything does not arise in your life, isn't it?

Your ideas, your beliefs, your opinions – if you just see, all of this is absolute nonsense, then you are going to wash it off. But when you attach so much value to it, how can you wash it off? You will not wash it off, isn't it? This is like putting the anchor and going on rowing the boat. Summer becomes autumn, autumn becomes winter, winter becomes spring – everything is changing, so you can believe that you are going somewhere. But with the anchor down, you are not going anywhere, isn't it? If you want to go somewhere, even before you row, first thing that you do is pull the anchor in, and the boat will go. If you take in the anchor, river going to the ocean will happen; boat going to the ocean also will happen – this way or that way, isn't it? See, what you call as *myself* is the anchor. Now, if you are unable to completely remove that anchor, then at least you must make that anchor into a toy anchor. Right now, *you* are the hero. Don't make yourself important. *Your* ideas, *your* opinions, *your* emotions, *your* thoughts are no more important. What you call as *myself* is just a bundle of thoughts, emotions

and opinions, isn't it so? *Your* thoughts, *your* emotions, *your* opinions – don't make it important.

The physical science has no answer for life. Physical science and technology can only bring comfort and convenience to your life; they cannot solve your life situations. Western societies are enough proof of this, isn't it so? Definitely, because of science and technology, we are the most comfortable generation *ever* on this planet, isn't it so?

A certain quality accordingly attracts certain types of life towards it, isn't it? That is so with you also. Once you gather a certain level of karmic substance, everything happens to you in *that* way. You go *into* that direction, and it also comes to you *from* that direction; in both ways it is happening. (...) If you are continuously accident-prone, suffering injuries, the one best thing you can do is, you must withdraw into a space which is supportive. The whole idea why ashrams were built was, when you go into such modes, you withdraw, so that you work it out in a safe atmosphere. Now, what would have played out in ten years' time, you work it out in ten days' time in a very safe atmosphere. If you feel that suddenly an unusual sense of bad luck, or accidents, or unnecessary levels of sickness is happening to you, it means it's time that you withdraw, step back, work this thing out within yourself, so that you're not exposed to the world. You need to do this once in a while – withdraw into a safe atmosphere, drop a layer of your nonsense, like a snake sheds a layer of its skin, and come out fresh. This is needed for every human being.

There is a spark of awareness, even in the most extreme moments of your life, but unfortunately, you don't choose to empower that. (...) Your willingness comes in installments; accordingly, transformation comes in installments. Being truly willing means that you have no will on your own. In love, in meditation, your identification drops; when your identification drops, your will also drops, isn't it? There is no surrender, no sacrifice, just a little bit of sensibility.

One who is *above* his intellect is a *buddha*; one who is *in* his intellect is a non-stop suffering human being. Once you're into your intellect, your anxieties and struggles are never gone, please see. It does not matter whether you are a beggar or a king, your suffering is always on, isn't it? Your suffering is sitting right behind you; like a tail, it will always follow you wherever you go.

If you try to force the giving up of an established pattern within you, then it will take up some other form; it will find some other expression.

On one level, *karma* is taking care of your self-preservation process; but what is self-preservation also happens to be a kind of imprisonment on a different level. You're enjoying it on one level; on another level, you are suffering it, because it also limits your freedom. Only when you are looking for freedom, now bondage is a problem, isn't it? Otherwise, bondage is quite safe; freedom is dangerous – freedom could be *anything*. So, *karma* is not always against you; most of the time, it's working for you.

Bring awareness, or consciousness, to the whole process of life, and your action will be no more about you. (...) Your action will be no more about you if your existence becomes blissful. Right now, your action is about you, because you are acting in pursuit of happiness. Because your action is in pursuit of happiness, action has become so important for you. If you were blissful by your own nature, what would you do? You could just sit here and do nothing, and if something is needed, that you would do. That's how life should be, isn't it? If you are complete, if you are a whole being by your own nature, there is no need to do anything. But if something needs to be done, you have no hesitation at all about it.

You change the quality of your life not by changing the content of your life, but by changing the context of your life. The action might be the same, but the intention, the volition is different. Whatever the kind of intention, accordingly, you have a consequence attached to it.

You have no duty in this world. Duties were always created by vested interests. People who rule you are telling you what is your duty towards them. And people who are being ruled, they are trying to tell the rulers what is their duty towards them. Parents are telling their children; children are telling their parents. Husbands are telling their wives; wives are telling their husbands. All vested interests, isn't it? You have no duty in this world. If you have love for something, you do it. If you have no love, just close your eyes and sit. Yes, it's better; then, without your work, the world will be better, rather than you doing miserable activity. When you do something because it is your duty, it is bound to be burdensome, isn't it? When your activity is such a suffering, you will create a lot of suffering in the world. If you can work joyfully, work 24 hours a day; if you can't work joyfully, please don't work – beg your food, eat and sleep. See, when you live your life as duty, it is bound to be miserable. When you are like this, you will naturally suffer, and you will ensure that everybody around you suffers.

Instead of being a psychological process, become an existential process, which is only possible in *this moment*. Your psychological process is only possible because you feed upon the past and you project into the future. Please see, the psychological process is possible only because you draw upon past information and project it into the future. This is the only reason why the psychological process is going on endlessly. If you don't feed upon the past, mind will become standstill right now, because it cannot go on without the past.

If unpleasant events have happened in our lives, we should have become wiser sooner than others, isn't it? Instead, we become wounded. Why? Because we say, we are not responsible for it, and the unpleasant event will be played off again and again and again in our life. Whoever abused you, they did it only once; you are abusing yourself a hundred times over – who is the greater criminal? If you see "I am responsible", even the unpleasantness can be turned into wisdom. If you are intelligent and if you respond to an unpleasant event sensibly, consciously, you can make that also into a process of growth, into a process of enriching your life, isn't it so? Otherwise, you'll carry this ugliness right through your life. Somebody did something for a moment; you do the same thing to yourself for a lifetime – definitely, you are a worse criminal than that person,

isn't it? Because you are causing more pain and harm to yourself. (...) Everything that happens to you in your life, and everything that doesn't happen to you in your life, are you responsible for it? If you see "I am", you will create your life the way you want it; if you think you're not, you will be a helpless pawn in this world.

Living *for* the moment is a pleasure seeker's life; living *in* the moment is the life of a conscious person.

Once you see that this moment is inevitable, the next moment becomes a new possibility. Otherwise, you are just dragging the past into the future; you are messing up all the possibilities of your life.

You never talk about somebody else's *karma*. When you utter the word *karma*, it's always about you, never about somebody else. You have no business with somebody else's *karma*. When you say *karma*, it's always you, never somebody else. If you talk about somebody else's *karma*, it will become your *karma*.

Enlightenment means that your experience of life has crossed the limitations of the physical; dimensions beyond the physical have come into your living experience. So though you live in the body, you're not it; though you use your mind, you're not it; though you live in the world, you're not it – or in other words, you have become a perfect stranger, to the world, to the body, and to your own mind. A distance has come within you. Now, once the distance is there, if you wish to withdraw, you can withdraw; but if you want to play, you can play without getting caught up with the world, or your mind, or your emotions, or your body. So, enlightenment is a certain freedom which relieves you from the process of life and death.

Once you turn in the direction of enlightenment, that in itself is a fantastic step, because some day, you will walk; you're bound to walk, isn't it? Either you walk out of your own intelligence, or you walk because life bites you very badly. If you are intelligent, you will walk before life bites you. But, to turn into the right direction, that in itself is a great step.

Your family has nothing to do with your enlightenment, nor has your monkhood anything to do with your enlightenment. By becoming a family person or by becoming a monk, you are just choosing a certain atmosphere to live in. What is within you will not change because of this, isn't it? Whatever is the kind of atmosphere that is suitable for you, conducive for you, you choose that. But don't ever believe that by going to the mountain you'll get enlightened, or by living in a cave you'll get enlightened – no, this has nothing to do with that, because it is an inner dimension. What kind of external arrangements you make for your own life has nothing to do with that.

What should you do in order to be enlightened? – Now once again, enlightenment is not an achievement; enlightenment is not going to the peak. Enlightenment is a homecoming: you come back to your original nature. (...) Right now, you're deeply, deeply identified with things that you are not. You have

identified yourself with all kinds of accumulations that you have gathered. (...) Your body is an accumulation; your mind is an accumulation; everything that you know around you is an accumulation, isn't it? But you believe, these things you have picked up, this is you. Until you fall dead, you go on believing this, isn't it so? So right now, you have got distorted vision. If you stop your distortions and come back to your original nature, that's enlightenment. – "So what do I have to do?" – There is really nothing to do – if you don't do anything, it will happen. (...) If you simply sit here and don't do anything, either with your body or with your mind or with your emotions, the reality of the existence will burst forward within you – there is nobody to stop it. But right now, you have gotten yourself into a mental state which is such that there is no way you can do nothing. All the time you are out doing something; you are constantly "on". You are such a slave of your mind – endlessly it's going on: you can't stop it; you can't hold it; you can't do anything about it. Because once you get into the trap of the mind, it just goes on endlessly; it has its own momentum. If you just rev it up and leave it, it can go on for many years, picking up more and more momentum – it doesn't need your assistance anymore, isn't it so? (...) So, to bring you to the state where you can do nothing, we will have to do many things. Otherwise, you will not be able to sit here in one place. (...) Slowly, with *yoga* and all these postures, we tie your hands up in such a way that you can't mess with it... because you're in a posture, somehow.

People who are reasonably happy in the world are people who got a little break from the nonsense in their head; that's all. They're not all the time like this. Some moments, they're not so messed up, so they're okay.

Mangoes happen only in one season; you notice the sweetness only at a certain time. (...) But it's been on right through the year, isn't it? (...) right through the year, the mango tree was striving and working to produce the sweetness. (...) During the year, you will not find a single hinge of sweetness – but when the mango comes, how much sweetness! (...) Where is it coming from? For sure, it is a process. But can everybody see the process, identify the process? No. When someone is evolving on the spiritual path, others thought he is a nutcase: somebody thought he is vagrant; somebody thought he is a vagabond; somebody thought he is something else. But when the sweetness came, everybody who tasted realized that it is a fantastic thing. (...) So, nothing in the universe happens just like that, with a bang; everything is a process. Can you identify the process? Can you recognize the process? This is the question.

Every human being has some kind of genius, but over 90% of the human beings never find expression for it, because they give in to other things – systems in the society, their own fears, their own anxieties, their own need for security... all of this represses their genius. (...) Other things become more important. (...) When you were twelve, fifteen, you thought, "I'll do this! I'll do that! I will go to the moon!" But then, you saw the neighborhood girl, and you started calling *her* the moon... – and the moon disappeared. So, like this, in everybody, the possibility is wide open. The thing is: can you sustain the process and allow it to become a possibility? Between possibility and reality, there is a distance. Most people neither have the courage nor the conviction to walk that distance. Largely,

spiritual process is a kind of entertainment: you go to discourse after discourse; you read more and more books; you debate about heaven and hell and everything – but you do nothing about this life. It's largely like entertainment. (...) So, there is a process for sure. The process can be approached consciously, or it can be an unconscious process – (...) whichever way, if you're doing the right things, you will find the truth of your inner nature.

Put yourself in different stages of life and see whether the things in your life still mean a lot to you. (...) You're on the deathbed – just see whether your jewelry, your house, your car will mean something to you on that day. This does not mean that you must give it up today – it is just that you must keep it in its right place; you must not carry it in your heart. (...) There is a difference between using something and being used by something. Most people do not know how to use the things that they buy – the things that they buy are using them up; they are enslaving the human being. Whatever things you want to use, you can use, that's not an issue. But the problem is, you let those things use you – this is not okay. So if you just take care that you are not used by anything, you understand the limited role that everything has in your life: the limited role of your education, the limited role of your career, the limited role of your marriage, the limited role of your relationships, the limited role of your wealth, the limited role of everything that you are doing... If you understand where one thing begins and where it ends, then you don't have to do anything; spiritual process is on. When the season is right, the flowers will bloom and mangoes will come.

First establish yourself in *yoga*; then act. But now, you started your action in a mess; so you come to *yoga*. (...) Forget about what you want in the world, from the world, from the people – drop it. First establish that what happens within you is determined by you, and nobody else but you. (...) Right now, without fixing the fundamental, we are trying to take this life somewhere, we are trying to do things in the world – this is trouble. (...) When you are a young person, there is no need for things to happen in your life 'right now'; this is a time to establish yourself. First establish yourself; this is not a time to drive – if you drive before you fix the wheels of the car, it's going to be painful and disastrous. Don't do that to yourself.

You must bring yourself to moments of joy and clarity within yourself. At that moment, what you decide, even if you die, you must go by that. (...) When you're joyful and clear, you are not compulsive. Otherwise, when you are in different states of compulsiveness and you make decisions as to which way to turn, you will be endlessly lost. It is not about what you are doing; it is just that you are doing it in an unwavering way. You are just unwavering; you have become one-pointed – no matter what it is, things will open up; nobody can deny it to you. But if every day, you are off and on, your thoughts and emotions are flying this way and that way, you keep changing your mind again and again and again, then you will go in circles, endlessly in circles; then you are not going anywhere, and nothing will happen. Changing directions again and again will put you into an endless state of being lost, always lost. (...) you will be a torture to yourself and to everyone around you.

Existence, that which is endless, that which is eternal, that which is boundless, that which is ever-expanding – that existence can be contained in this being. (...) How to contain it, that's the whole beauty of it. (...) But it doesn't happen, because you keep changing directions – wherever you find a little niche which is comfortable, you try to settle down there. This so-called getting civilized has become a huge detriment for spiritual process. (...) we got into a certain kind of madness of safety and security. Whether it's physical, psychological or emotional, we're always looking for that niche where we can settle down and sleep. And once you find a niche, and it's getting too sweet and comfortable, then you don't have the courage to step out and once again make the journey. If all you are looking for is a picnic, then it's okay. (...) But you are looking at the beauty of the place, and your mind is saying: "this is it! this place is so beautiful – what is the purpose of taking one more step?" (...) Do you see that every time, for different situations you get into, for different states of comfort or discomfort you get into, you develop a new logic – have you noticed this with yourself? Like they say, when you're a student, everybody's a communist; the moment you come out of your education and get yourself a job, you become a socialist; and the moment you get married, you become a capitalist. According to new situations, different levels of comfort or discomfort, new levels of logic will come. The world has come to a point where the Maoists have become capitalist – that's it! And it keeps happening: you settle down and you get comfortable in the new niche. That's why what you see in certain moments of joy and clarity, you must stick to that, no matter how it might feel tomorrow – that's well-being.

Everything in this system is cyclical, isn't it? The earth is going in cycles; the moon is going in cycles – everything is cyclical. (...) The same things are happening if you closely observe your life. (...) It's not just happening with your mental and emotional situations. If you are conscious, even physical situations around you will repeat themselves. It's so uncanny – even physical situations happen exactly the same way. (...) But our fortune is, we are not just physical; we have other dimensions to us. In terms of your mental status, either it can continue to grow, or it can go in circles; in terms of your emotional status, it can continue to grow, or it can go in cycles – you can go in cycles, or you can go somewhere. (...) *If you do not stand up with a certain level of awareness and a certain level of determination and a sense of going somewhere, you will naturally become a part of the cycles.* (...) There are different kinds of cycles, longer cycles and shorter cycles. (...) Depending upon how unaware you are, how destabilized you are, how unfocused you are, you become available to those cycles. If you are completely scattered, you become available to the smallest cycle. If you are a little focused, you become available to longer cycles. But everybody is subject to these cycles. These cycles can mean bondage, or these cycles can also mean transcendence: either you repeat the same cycle; or from one cycle of life to another, you transcend – that depends on who you are. (...) *Astrology* is trying to tell you how these cycles bind you; *spiritual process* is telling you how you can get away from these cycles. If you live by the cycles, being conscious of the cycles, your life will have a certain equanimity, a certain level of success, a certain level of well-being, a certain level of prosperity. If you break the cycle, if you are constantly looking how to become free from the cycle, you are looking for your

liberation. *Are you looking for just well-being, or are you looking for liberation? – That's the question; accordingly you must live.*

With every aspect of your life, if you recognize how much is involved to make a single aspect of your life happen – a piece of cloth, or a piece of bread, or a morsel of food – what it takes for it to be created and land on your plate, if you just see, from microorganisms to human beings, how many lives are participating in making things happen for you every moment of your life, if you're conscious of it, if you peel your eyes and look at it properly, then you're overwhelmed with gratitude, because you could never do this by yourself.

Yoga is the science and technology of nourishing the roots of your existence, so that everything else naturally flowers. Just because you want a flower, the flower will not come; you have to do the right things – only then it happens, isn't it? That is so with everything in your life. If you do not do the right things, it will not happen.

Do not focus your life on expression – it will go to waste. Perception – *let this life be a lifetime of perception*. All *sadhana* is oriented largely towards perception. (...) why people go into silence for years is: no expression; only perception. (...) So *sadhana* is largely, largely perception-oriented; 95% of *sadhana* is perception-oriented.

People give expression to all kinds of limitations that they have. But the limitations that you have, it's best that they don't find expression, because it pollutes everything around you. (...) Limitedness is the biggest poison. It is not that you have to do something negative, no – limitedness is the basis of your suffering. (...) The less expression it finds, the better it is.

The word *tantra* literally means technique or technology. This is an inner technology; these are subjective methods, not objective methods. (...) It is not any different from *yoga*; it is a limb of *yoga* called *tantra yoga*. (...) The compulsive cyclical nature of the body and mind render themselves a barrier for higher possibilities. *Tantra* is to go beyond, so that compulsiveness of the body and mind does not keep us trapped in our limitations. It is about learning to use the body and mind, not as oneself, but as a stepping-stone to deliver this being to the highest possible dimension. (...) one must know the limitations beyond which body and mind will not carry us. It is only upon recognizing these limitations, and when the longing to touch other dimensions comes, that *yoga* and *tantra* become relevant. (...) In *tantra*, it is not that someone is using just sexuality to grow – they are using *every aspect* to grow. Unfortunately, there may be people who are attracted to such a path for the wrong reasons: they want a spiritual sanction for their sexuality. Sexual needs can be fulfilled by forming relationships for that purpose, either within or outside the fold. Using spiritual process to fulfill sexual compulsion is reprehensible and irresponsible. It can lead to various levels of loss, because the tantric process is not only used for the individual's spiritual growth, but also to create an energetic space to support other possibilities that bring well-being to many. Of the different energy manifestations in the body, referred to as the 114 *chakras*, spilling from the top

three is considered the highest. If you have to build up to this, every basic instinct, including the sexual instinct, emotions, intellect and survival process, must be used to build and hype the energy system. The intention is to deploy all instincts for which a certain amount of energy is dedicated in the body. If one goes into an actual sexual act, the build-up and the purpose will be lost. This is a path that needs extreme self-discipline, a kind of discipline which is not possible for most people even to attempt.

Left-hand *tantra*, which is cruder technology, involves various rituals. There is also a right-hand path, which is very refined technology. These two are completely different in nature. The right-hand path is more internal, and energy-wise, it is all about you. It does not involve any ritual or outside act as such. (...) *Tantra* means, you are able to use your energies to make things happen. If you can make your mind razor-sharp to cut through everything, this is also one kind of *tantra*. If you can make your energies work upon your heart to become utterly loving and you can burst forth with enormous love that just overwhelms everyone, this is also *tantra*. If you can make your physical body enormously powerful to make it do incredible feats, this is also *tantra*. Or if you can make your energies do things by themselves without employing the body, mind or emotion, this is also *tantra*. (...) *Tantra* is not some weird nonsense, but a certain capability; without it, there is no possibility. The question is: how refined is your *tantra*? If you want to make your energies move, do you have to do 10.000 rituals, or can you just sit here and simply do it? That is the big difference. Low technology or high technology, that is the question; but without *tantra*, there is no spiritual process. There is no *guru* without a *tantra*; if he has no technology, then he is not a *guru*. (...) Capability means, a certain ability to do things which people cannot do for themselves. In that sense, if there is no *tantra*, then there is really no *guru*. (...) The sacred relationship between *guru* and *shishya* is definitely orgasmic, but not sexual. The *guru-shishya* relationship is to deliver the *shishya* to a higher dimension of consciousness, not to trap him into the compulsive nature of sexuality. (...) Those who have failed to achieve an orgasmic state of existence will associate an ecstatic state with sexuality, because that is probably the highest level of experience they have known. (...) A *shishya* can establish a very intimate relationship with a *guru*. Intimacy is generally understood only as two bodies touching. The body is not intimate enough for one who is on the spiritual path: the physical body is an accumulation from outside – so in the tantric and yogic systems, the body is never considered an intimate part of you. Only when energies meet and mingle, and a *guru's* energies overwhelm and override the *shishya's* energies, it leads to an orgasmic experience – a union, but not of a sexual kind. If all you want is to do a meditation or spiritual practice, you don't really need a *guru* – the *guru* is here essentially to overwhelm you with nameless ecstasies. *Tantra* is a technology of liberation, not enslavement.

The whole aspect of *tantra* is just about using your imagination in such a systematic way that you go on creating. (...) The whole tantric procedure is just that – using your imagination and creating everything, point by point, and after some time, you can breathe life into it. (...) Your mind is so crystallized on the form, you actually create the form. You can crystallize reality simply by using your mind.

The simple principle of *tantra yoga* is: whatever can take you down can also take you up. The ways in which a man usually sinks in his life are through food, alcoholic drink and sexuality; *tantra yoga* uses the same three vehicles to rise up. But once people start using certain substances, they must be in a certain state; otherwise, it just becomes an addiction. This needs extreme discipline, a kind of discipline which is not possible for most people even to attempt. When people walk this kind of path, of a 100 people to take it up, 99 will end up only as drunkards. This is what is known as left-hand *tantra*, which is cruder technology.

Tantra means, extreme discipline: *tantra* means, a technology, a method, a capability to unmake life and to make life again; *tantra* means, to have such mastery over the system that you can dismantle life completely and put it back together again. (...) Unless you have some mastery over life, you cannot do anything: everyone has *some* mastery over life; (...) the level of mastery that you have determines how much you can do. The image of Kali standing on Shiva essentially symbolizes having total mastery over the process of life; it means that you can kill a god and then give life back to him. – That is audacious, isn't it? That is how the technology of *tantra* is.

Most dreams, over 90% of human dreams, are just unfulfilled desires, because you have no control over this – you are not playing the desire; the desire is playing you. You do not pursue it really, but anything that you see becomes a desire: “Oh, I wish I had this; I wish I had that”. (...) Because you are desiring in an unbridled way, it's not in your control. (...) Once you desire something, you are investing a certain amount of energy in that direction. (...) Please see: you are investing a certain amount of energy in one given desire, while the energy invested in some other, earlier desire is still going on. You may not be conscious, but in a day, you do this with a hundred different things: you become all scattered. You're so scattered – now mind is endlessly going on with meaningless thought, because constantly your energy is being thrown in different directions; it is not going in *one* direction. (...) when you have a deep longing for something in particular, when you create a big longing towards something, then all these things disappear. When you invest in *one* direction, then suddenly, all other thoughts just disappear from your mind. So, dream is happening simply because your mind is just being constantly scattered around with desiring process. And all of it can never be fulfilled in reality, so you're working overtime in the night, fulfilling them in fantasy ways. Desire is just free cinema; enjoy it. Whether it's a horror movie, or a love story, or a suspense thriller, just enjoy it – what's the problem? (...) If dreams are significant, they will manifest. But most of the dreams are just unfulfilled desires being fulfilled. (...) So don't pay any attention to dreams; pay attention to life.

Death is a clear statement that there is no takeaway in this life. Mysticism means that you understood that there is no takeaway, so you decided to make the best out of it now. Making the best out of it does not mean eating all that you can eat or drinking all that you can drink. It is not the actions of life which are enriching and fulfilling – it is the depth of experience. How vibrant you become as a life, that's all there is.

Do not understand growth as like this: [Sadhguru expands his arms and hands]. Growth is to become like thin air, that your presence is strong, but your personality is like nothing, so you fit into anything. This is very important: flexibility – (...) as a life, you're flexible. If you want to do something in this world, you must be able to fit into any situation and transform that. If you don't fit in, you cannot transform – that's what it is.

Sadhana must continue: you must see how to use the tools to build yourself into a truly spectacular human being. I want to see that happen.

For one who is only watching the reflections of his mind, nothing will change – endless cycles will go on, but nothing will change... because nothing changes on the mirror: whose face is being reflected right now will not change the quality of the mirror in any way. Who is behind the mirror? – If you know who is behind the mirror, then we can change everything; then, we can even make the mirror turn around and turn inward completely.

One thing that happened in the society is that the value of solitude is gone. What it means to be in solitude – it is the most profound time of your life; this is the time to soak up life. So one thing was maintained in yogic cultures: how much time you spend in imbibing things or perceiving things, and how much time you spend in expression, this must be two thirds into one third. If you are two thirds of the time imbibing, and if you express one third, then your expression will be profound and worthwhile for everybody – it will not be just noise in the world; it will be of some value. But today, because of very early opportunities to express, even a six-year-old child has something to say on Facebook... (...) So there is no opportunity to perceive and imbibe life; there is simply flaky noise going on. And so, as humans become more and more din, being lonely is a natural consequence. (...) Loneliness is essentially happening because there is nothing beyond your thought and emotional process; you have become just physiological and psychological process; there is nothing more profound happening within the human being. (...) And if loneliness crushes you further, then it becomes mental illness – they are progressions. (...) Loneliness is an incubation period for more complex problems that will naturally evolve.

Individuals should set a clear standard for themselves as to how to be. Well, it's easier said than done, because human beings are not committed to their well-being, unfortunately – they want well-being to come to them; they are not committed to creating it.

Freedom is a consequence of living in a certain way. (...) You cannot create the fruit; you can only nurture the tree. (...) Right now, we are plucking the fruit out of a tree that is non-existent. Freedom without responsibility will naturally lead to freakier and freakier expressions of the human mind. (...) This culture of wanting to go somewhere, always, has to be reversed.

Compulsion essentially is the absence of consciousness.

In your life, when you're done with one thing, the next thing begins. And when you're done with *everything*, spiritual process begins. (...) A certain awareness arises in you; suddenly you know that little games don't satisfy you anymore. (...) When the so-called big things in your life become petty things, (...) when all the childish games disappear, (...) now spirituality arises. (...) Only awareness can induce this maturity – when you have the awareness to see yourself through the various activities of life, the various compulsions of life, the various longings of life, as simply an endless rigmarole which doesn't really lead you on to anything in particular. (...) So, the spiritual process has to begin somewhere, but the longing to go beyond the limitations in which you live is always there. Every little thing in our lives, when we are into it, it seems like it's everything, isn't it so? Every little thing in our lives, from eating what we want, to doing what we want, to relationships, and all those things – when we are into it, it looks like it's the end of all life; it means so much. But if we rise a little above that and look at it, suddenly, they all become such petty things – you even wonder, why the hell am I in this? So, when this question begins to rise, why am I in all these little things stuck like this, then the spiritual process has begun.

If things come to you before you are ready for it, it will not be a blessing. Whether it is material well-being, or spiritual well-being, or great experiences, or whatever: if the best things happen to you before you're ready for it in your experience, it will not be a blessing; it will become a great difficulty – you will not be able to handle it. (...) *Your business on the spiritual path is just to keep yourself receptive, not to expect or demand as to what should happen.* So the best thing is always to keep yourself receptive and do what you have to do.

Nowadays, many people loaded with morality carry much of misplaced compassion.

Whenever something hurts you, there are two options: you can either become wounded, or you can become wise – this is the choice. The more things hurt you early on in your life, the wiser you should have become, isn't it? But unfortunately, most people become wounded. (...) They turn their own intelligence against themselves; that's all.

The idea of doing *sadhana* is that all questions will burn, not that you will find answers. (...) You need to understand this: questions are coming from a place which can never know. That place from which you are asking questions is not capable of knowing anything; it wants a conclusion. I'm not the sort of to give you a conclusion; I'm a process. If you are willing to be a process of growth, I'm there for you; if you want a conclusion, I will frustrate you.

Mind is not in one place – there is a body of mind: there is a body of memory; there is a body of physicality; there is a body of energy. So, if you just look at one part of who you are and try to meddle with that constantly, if you don't know how to make the other things function, and other things are functioning by accident, it is like somebody is trying to drive with a handbrake on. A lot of people do this; they don't realize... (...) Right now, most people are like this: because they've come to a school or a college, now a little bit of intellect has been

fired up with all kinds of outside information. With this, they're doing all kinds of things, and introspection. But: who's introspecting whom? These are all Western ideas, which have brought enormous suffering to human beings, enormous. Psychological process is a consequence of the type of data that you have gathered and how you process it, isn't it? If you keep it a little aside, it has no impact on you. When you want, you should use it; when you don't want, you must keep it aside. (...) Right now, people think they're thinking all the time. But what you're calling as *introspection*, (...) it is actually a kind of diarrhea – it's just going on. (...) Essentially, see, thinking means that you use your thought process consciously to go in a certain direction – that's thinking. If it's simply running all the time, that's diarrhea, isn't it? So you must differentiate between the two: is this a conscious thought process, or is it simply running wildly? This is very important.

Introspection means: rear view of life; life in the rear-view mirror. (...) In this country (India), we don't believe in introspection. Because, see, you're trying to analyze your own mess – it's not going to work like that. If you hold it at a distance, you clearly know what it is; you don't have to think about it. (...) Mind is a computing process – maybe far more complex than the computers you are operating; but essentially, it is a computing process: without data, it doesn't function. So, if you have written the software, if you know the data, if you know what it can do and cannot do – then, what is there to introspect? (...) You need more *clarity of seeing things*. If you see something, if you can just see it clearly as it is, then there is no need to introspect anything. (...) So, the issue is, we are trying to fix life with introspection, morality, ethics, ideas, philosophies, opinions, role models, this, that. – No! That's not what is needed. – What is needed is that this life should happen in an exuberant way, in the highest pinnacle that it can happen; it should spark. (...) you must do a little engineering, inner engineering, so that this one will work just the way you want. With respect to the world, we will do our best. (...) The world will never happen 100% the way you want it.

First you need insight; only then inspiration.

Education is about expanding the horizons of your life. But right now, education is just a tool to earn your living. (...) Somewhere, unfortunately, education has become a commodity for prestige and earning a living, or throwing yourself around, throwing your weight upon other people. No, education, if you really acquire knowledge, it is a humbling experience, always: (...) you realize that even if you go to the end of your life, still you won't know much – that is the nature of life. (...) But education, instead of bringing that understanding, is bringing arrogance, illness, misery, endless consumption.

According to genetic scientists, the DNA difference between you and a chimpanzee is only 1,23%. (...) 1,23% is not much of a difference, isn't it? So, physiologically, that is how close to a chimpanzee you are – but, in terms of intelligence and awareness, you're worlds apart. And this is your problem. (...) from monkey to man, the jump has been very quick. (...) a monkey became a man rather too quickly. (...) You have an intelligence for which you don't have a stable enough platform. (...) If you get a double promotion, should you enjoy it or suffer

it? If you make yourself competent, you enjoy it; if you are not competent, you will suffer it, isn't it? So, this is just that. We got a little jump, and now we are suffering. We have an intellect; we have an intelligence. If you don't create a stable chemistry, stable energy system, stable body, this intelligence is going to drive you crazy. And that's happening at a pandemic level right now.

Most creatures are made in such a way that 90% of who they are, what they can do, what they cannot do, is fixed by nature; 10% latitude is there to express individual characteristics. If there are ten tigers, 90% they are all the same; 10% characteristic differences may be there. But if there are ten human beings, are they the same? (...) As a human being, you're largely coming unformed. (...) only 10% was determined by nature; 90% is left in our hands. (...) You need to form yourself; you don't come ready-made. (...) Only 10% has been done by nature; 90% of this human being, you have to build it. So this is why time is important: how you mature, how you become either a fragrant, wonderful human being or a nasty human being, is your choice. (...) Wonderful and nasty – both you have experienced in your life, all of you, isn't it? Some moments you have been very wonderful; some moments you have been very nasty. (...) So you are capable of being a wonderful being, yes? Only thing is, you are demanding ideal conditions to be wonderful.

There is an element in a human being which is beyond one's body and mind. If you don't touch that, you never know life in its depth; then, you know life only on its surface. (...) Right now, clothes is something that we put on. (...) If you cannot distinguish between what you wear and what you are, then there is a mental issue, isn't it? (...) In the same way, body is also something that you put on; the whole heap of mind is also something that you put on over a period of time, isn't it?

Spiritual means that you are beginning to experience something beyond the limitations of your physiological and psychological stuff. Right now, most people's life is limited to the boundaries of their physiology and their psychological space. If one is experiencing something beyond that, then that is called spiritual.

Freedom is a very vague idea; bondage is a very clear idea. (...) freedom is a vague and wonderful idea which doesn't take you anywhere. But if you understand what is binding you, and if you undo that, you will come to a little better level of bondage. (...) And if you undo bondage, you will come to a higher level of bondage. And if you undo that higher level of bondage, then you will come to a still higher level of bondage. And if you keep on undoing various things which bind you, then one day, maybe, they will run out of stock. And when they run out of stock as to how to bind you, then we say, you are in *mukti*, you're free.

You cannot surrender by will. If you have a will, how can you surrender? (...) if you pay attention to the nature of your existence, it is a deep surrender.

Do not get into spiritual jargon. This is very important – it is very important that in your mind, your articulation is not unnecessarily causing confusion to yourself.

The problem in life is not that you cannot survive; the problem is that you want to survive better than the next person – that is the problem. (...) You have to sit on top of the next person's head – only then do you feel on top of the world, isn't it?

Competition means, your whole thing is about doing a little better than somebody else – it's a very poor way to live. Because each individual, each human being, has his own unexplored genius within himself. The tragedy of humanity right now is that over 90% of the human beings will pass through their entire life, they'll go to their grave without ever touching the innate qualities of their competence, of what they're capable of, of what they could be. (...) Every life is unique and it's a possibility; every life needs nurture. (...) But everybody is put through the same system. (...) Neither parents, nor teachers, nor most adults in the world have the necessary commitment to nurture an individual person to his highest possibility – everybody is in a hurry.

Time is ticking away for all of us; so, this limited amount of time, in some way, every human being, whatever their idea of life, they want to max it some way: some people want to eat maximum amount of food they can eat; some people want to have maximum pleasure they can have; some people want to earn maximum amount of money they can earn; some people want to know maximum things that they can know – whatever it is for us, we want to max it one way or the other. So, somebody told you: (...) “if you get this kind of education, if you get that kind of education, then you can find maximum expression in the world”. – It's fine; I have nothing against it. But you should not forget *why* you are educating yourself. (...) As a life, you want to become a full-fledged life. (...) So, what is a full-fledged human being? Once you come as a human, you must explore that, isn't it?

If you do not do what you cannot do, no problem. But there is something within you which troubles you if you're not doing what you *can* do.

Whether you're happy or unhappy has nothing to do with what's around you. People are committing suicide in palaces, isn't it? (...) Most affluent nations are seeing the rise of suicides and mental illnesses. So somewhere, your idea of a heaven is not working. (...) Human experience is caused from *within you*; joy or misery, both come from within you. Now, what comes from within you, if you try to extract it from outside, then you are turning the world upside down. What for? In search of human happiness and well-being. See, don't think some evil people are destroying the planet. No – it's good people in search of their well-being who are turning the world upside down. Now, we see this planet is not enough, so we want to go to other planets and turn them upside down also. (...) I'm not against turning things upside down – but you're doing it in search of your well-being, which will never happen that way. I'm concerned about the inefficiency of it, not the morality of it.

Never misunderstand your psychological drama to be a reality. (...) it's a mix of thoughts, emotions, opinions, prejudices and multiple things. But essentially, it is your drama. If you think your drama is existentially true, then you will become a psychological case. You must understand: it is *your* drama; whatever is happening in your head right now is *your* drama. (...) It is *your* drama; it is not happening because of somebody or something. (...) This drama, the moment you are not the director, that's called madness. And different people are in different levels of socially accepted madness. (...) This mind is the greatest miracle we have on this planet. (...) But this miracle, for most human beings, is a misery manufacturing machine. They're cutting themselves into pieces, using it against themselves. If your own fingers are plucking your eyeballs out, everybody here will understand that you lost it. But if your own thoughts are poking you, unfortunately everybody thinks it's normal. (...) Right now, one of the biggest concerns on the planet is mental health pandemic. (...) Essentially, the problem is, it doesn't matter what is given to you, you have learnt how to make a misery out of it. (...) And people are so deeply invested in their miseries that, whatever you do, they hang on to their miseries. (...) Essentially, your intelligence has turned against you. (...) Now, your brain is your enemy; (...) nobody has told you how to hold it – everybody is telling you how to conquer the damn world.

Fear of missing out is madness. Some things we do in this life; some things we don't do in this life. If you try to do everything, you will become mad, 100%. (...) See, if you're building things in your mind, if you build castles in the air, and start believing it's true, we call this neurosis. If you start living in that castle, we call it psychosis. And if a third person comes and collects rent for that castle, then he's a psychiatrist. Don't do this to yourself.

Don't complain about a damn thing. (...) There is no perfect thing in the universe. With everything, there are pluses and minuses. (...) We can strive to get things better, but we will never get them perfect, because always something better can be done – that's the beauty of life.

Stress essentially means, there's some friction happening within you.

Human potential can be explored only when these two situations happen: you know how to be, and there is no concern about bread. And that time is coming. (...) But if you do not know how to be, this wonderful time that's coming, which no human generation has ever enjoyed, that we don't have to work for our bread, that situation will go to waste. They're expecting 40% of the people will go to alcohol and drugs; 20% could commit suicide; another 10-15% will be insane in so many ways. 10%, 15% percent may start doing something fantastic because their genius will flower, because they don't have to earn bread. (...) So, please get ready and create something wonderful on this planet – don't become one of those slobs who'll sink into this and that nonsense.

Mantra, *yantra* and *tantra* are three different aspects of the same science. *Mantra* means the sound; *yantra* means the form; and *tantra* means the technology of putting it together.

Essentially, a *spiritual culture* means: a certain way of exploration, a certain way of seeking. Every human being can seek in their own way; if they don't know, they can seek guidance in a particular way – both are fine.

Silence is not a way of denying yourself life; it is not even about denying yourself articulation – silence is about moving from compulsiveness to consciousness. All sounds represent different forms and different patterns of compulsiveness. (...) There are sounds of pain, sounds of pleasure, sounds of misery, sounds of joy – for everything, there is a sound. (...) There are sounds of life, and there are sounds of death, and there are even sounds of silence. So this complex amalgamation of sounds creates different levels of intent, different levels of compulsiveness, different levels of bondage, and different possibilities of entanglement. (...) When one chooses to become conscious, not to be entangled in the compulsive nature of the existence, then one naturally chooses to become silent. (...) Sound is of the surface; silence is of the core. It is only the surface which makes the sound; (...) but at the core, there is no sound. (...) *Nishabd* means: absence of sound, a total absence of sound – (...) a dimension which is beyond life and death, that is what is being referred to as silence or *nishabd*. One cannot *do* this; one can only *become* this. (...) So there is a difference between *practicing silence* and *becoming silence*.

If something is possible only in intense activity, it is never sustainable. (...) Nobody can sustain intense activity – you'll expend yourself. Only if you can achieve it in inactivity, it is sustainable.

A human being, for survival, has to be active. Only when his vision falls upon something which is beyond survival, then he will think of stillness – then, he will understand, as he observes himself, as he notices the complexity of his compulsions, that the only way to solve it is to become still. To train this body, to train this mind, to become still – this takes some effort. If one is simply blissed out, he will become still – but otherwise, one has to work bit by bit; one has to work to bring this body to absolute stillness. Most people cannot hold their body in one place for any length of time.

When one becomes still, utterly still, one may not be able to hold on to the body unless one learns the tricks, the mechanism of the body.

When the time to lose your body comes, if you want to lose it gracefully, then you must know at least a little bit of stillness. If you want to put your body down like you can put this piece of cloth down, with the same ease, with the same gracefulness, then you need to have some stillness in you. Otherwise, you and your body have to be torn apart, which is an ugly and painful thing.

To become silent is possible only when you do not think much of yourself. (...) The moment you think there is some value to what you think, then you can't stop it. No way to stop it; it will just go on and on and on. See, there is absolutely no life value to your thought process: it is just memory recycling itself; it is just the same old nonsense recycling itself. And if you are excited, if you are enamored by this recycle, if you think it's great, then you cannot stop it. But if you see the

patterns of what it is, if you see the stupidity of what it is, then slowly, slowly, you will distance yourself, and it will collapse – because without attention, it cannot go on.

Everything is cyclical, isn't it? (...) Women cannot miss their cyclical nature: menstrual cycles are a strong reminder. (...) Physiologically, there is a strong reminder in the female body. (...) Men have to be much more aware; they need to do much more work – because otherwise, you will think you're going somewhere; but every time, you're going in circles.

When there is a periodic destabilization of the system, there is a great possibility to change. (...) But when there is a set process, then you cannot change things so easily.

Success comes because you have taken on the right kind of capability and attitude within yourself: your body, your mind, your emotions, your energies – everything needs to be tuned for success. If you do not tune yourself for success, then even if you work hard twenty-four hours of the day, success will not come. (...) If you are connected with that energy, if you are tuned for success, life will function better – but success is not assured; for nobody it is assured. (...) Success essentially means: cutting through something. If you want to cut through something, the sharpness of your knife will determine how quickly, how easily you cut through, isn't it? This is just that: your body, your mind, your emotions, your energies – how sharply they are focused, that quickly it will cut through. So the *yantra* is only the place to sharpen your knife; it is not the place to cut. (...) The *yantra* will not bring success, but it will tune you for success: success will come more effortlessly than otherwise.

In the name of Divinity, don't make yourself disabled. Divinity is an enablement; Divinity is an empowerment. Most people are using the Divine as a way to disable themselves. Please do not use spirituality and Divinity to disable yourself. It's an opportunity to enable yourself, to empower yourself; use it accordingly.

The word *asana* literally means a *posture*. When we say posture, every posture the body can take is an *asana*. (...) Of the innumerable postures that this body can take, we identified 84 *asanas* as *yogasanas*. These 84 postures are possibilities where your body will not sit as a hurdle in front of you, but act as a channel for your ultimate possibility. (...) For different states of consciousness that you experience, your body tends to take certain postures. Based on this, conversely, is the science of *asanas*. By consciously getting your body into a certain posture, you can also elevate your consciousness. The way you think, feel, perceive and understand can be altered simply because of the way you sit. Physical body is the easiest thing to work with. If you try to do something with your mind, it will play too many tricks. At least with the body, you know whether it's doing it right, whether it's cooperating or not cooperating. (...) The body is a reliable factor. If you work with it sensibly, *yoga asanas* will definitely lead to the possibility of ultimate union. The practice of *yoga asanas* provides countless benefits, including relief of chronic ailments, preparation of body and mind

towards higher possibilities, and slowing down the aging process. (...) Based on the 84 *asanas*, one *asana* is all that is needed.

All *asana* practices, and any yogic practice for that matter, is rooted in a fundamental system called the *bhuta shuddhi*. *Bhuta shuddhi* essentially means, to cleanse the elements in your system. (...) What you are cleansing them off is the previous memory. (...) If you do not cleanse these elements, that memory will bind you. (...) There are five elements – earth, water, fire, air, and space – but there are only four which need to be cleansed. There is no cleansing to be done with the space; it is only the other four which need to be attended to. Your body is the play of these five elements; the earth is a play of these five elements; the whole creation is a play of these five elements. So the yogic system essentially is about handling the elements right. If these five elements behave well within the system, everything about you will be fine. 72% of your body is actually water; another 12% is earth; another 6% is air; another 4% is fire – the remaining is space. This is how the body is constructed. So, for these four elements, there are different types of *sadhanas*, and for the fifth one too – to influence it, not to cleanse it. So if you do sufficient *bhuta shuddhi*, that is, if you cleanse these elements substantially, then you attain to a state called *bhuta siddhi*, that means you have mastery over the five elements. (...) If you want to evolve, you have to cleanse yourself of the memory which is imprinted on the elements in your system. If the elements do not lose their memory, they will not behave the way you want; they will keep on repeating the old cycles.

The seat of your experience is within you. If you are sitting on that seat, obviously, you would make the experience the way you want it.

Love is not about somebody; it is not a relationship. (...) To be loving is entirely your way of being, and you should not deny yourself that, no matter what. It does not matter what the world is doing; you should not miss out on the experience of being soaked in your own sweetness.

Once you come as a human being: stomach empty, only one problem; stomach full, one hundred problems. Because once you come as a human being, you're longing to expand. (...) More pleasure, more power, more knowledge – it may be different for different people, but everybody in their own way is longing to be something more than what they are right now. (...) So *yoga* means to approach this longing in the right way.

Human mind is such, if you explore this, that you can make a million people out of this same mind. Don't do that. Because then, you will need either a psychiatrist or an exorcist; that definitely will be the case. (...) There is only one here; this is just me: *this one* is an individual, no further indivisible. (...) People start creating many levels of themselves – but there are not many levels; there's just you. If you see that this is just you, there is room for tremendous transformation. The moment you make a crowd of yourself, there is no room for any kind of transformation. (...) So love, on one level, is an effort to unite what is two into one. Don't make *this one* two. (...) You don't have to love yourself, because then,

you will become two. (...) There is no need for self-love; love is yours anyway. You can become love.

First, being. Because you are a certain kind of being, you do certain things; and because you do certain things, you may get to have certain things. What you will get to have is not determined by you, but by the times in which we exist. (...) But unfortunately, most people start their life with what they want to have; then, in order to have that, they proceed to what they should do; and because of that, they become something – this is just trying to run life in the reverse manner.

There are many challenges in the world – the more you try to do, the more challenges; endless number of challenges. But if you yourself are a big challenge, then how are you supposed to deal with life?

Both physiological and psychological process is something that you slowly gathered over a period of time, isn't it so? What you gather can be yours, but it can never be you.

Confidence without clarity is a disastrous process.

You wanting to live a good life is one thing; you wanting to know the basis of life itself is another thing. The aspiration may not be there in everybody, and it is perfectly fine. Then, we can teach them a simple way how to make their chemistry pleasant, their psychology pleasant. Most people would be satisfied with that. (...) But it's not a way to explore the reality of one's existence. (...) The whole yogic system is focused on capturing consciousness.

"Dear God, give me this, give me that, save me, protect me, make me healthy, give me a little more than my neighbor" – this is all the prayer on the planet.

As time goes by, as they grow older, in one way or another, most people get crushed by life. (...) Slowly, the experience of life, if not very painful, has become burdensome. (...) It's a tragedy what human beings can do to themselves.

Enlightenment means, to start with the most important thing: your own business. It means, you mind your own business. Because right now, most of your business is of the crowd. (...) Nothing wrong with those things, but they must happen on the side.

You have to earn the second part of your life; otherwise, you will become a *human creature*, not a *human being*. If it's all about survival, eating, sleeping, reproduction, this, that, it's human creature, isn't it?

In the movement of life, of body, mind, and energy, we all become individuals of separate entity and existence. (...) But in stillness, there is oneness.

You must understand: desire does not take you towards your destiny – desire is a way of entangling yourself. If you're conscious and you throw the desire like a yo-yo, play with it and leave it, then there is no problem. But if desire drives you, it is not driving you towards your destiny, but towards disaster.

Your business is just to raise your energy, (...) to find intensity in *sadhana*. (...) Unless energy is powerful, it will not get you anywhere. (...) But when it gets too much, you are looking for releases. (...) Then you go and you find a release: you want to read a book; you want to switch on the television; you want to distract yourself – it feels good. But if you go on releasing like this, you will never have the necessary energy to burst into a different dimension. (...) So the practices that you are doing, all the methods that are used, are mainly to increase the energy levels in such a way that gradually it finds its way. If you allow it to find its way naturally, it will take a long time. (...) So, how to find intensity in *sadhana*? You cannot do just your *sadhana* with great intensity and do the rest of your life in a tepid way – it's not possible to do that. If you bring intensity to every aspect of your life, your *sadhana* also will find intensity. Just doing *sadhana* alone in an intense way and conducting your life like a mop cloth just won't work. You must bring intensity to everything; (...) you must make your life into *sadhana*. After all, what does *sadhana* mean? *Sadhana* means a device: you're employing your body or your breath or your mind or your emotion as a device to move yourself to a higher possibility. (...) your home situation, your activity in the workplace, the people around you – I'm saying, use *everything* as a device, as a way, as a stepping stone for a higher level of balance and capability. And at the end of every day, measure it and see: are you using situations and people properly? are you putting everything and everybody to good use? (...) If you are using people for your ultimate well-being, it is never ever against them: you will benefit; they will also benefit. (...) The *sadhana* has to become twenty-four hours. (...) If you don't have such a passion, that constantly you're seeing how to make this life into your highest possible reality, then there is no spiritual path in your life. (...) Right now, you're changing your direction every few moments – you think what's happening on the street is a distraction, what's happening in the office is a distraction, what's happening at home is a distraction. But they are not distractions; they are all spiritual tools.

You don't know what reality is. Just make yourself more and more aware; become more and more steady in your awareness. Just bring a little more quietness into yourself, so that you can feel life a little deeper within you. (...) If you are aware that you have been in an illusion, that's good. But if you become aware that you are still in another illusion, that's even better. If illusions have to go, you must stop creating them, isn't it? You must stop creating gods, devils, heavens, hells – everything. If you stop creating, you move from illusion to reality; if you start creating, you will go deeper and deeper into illusions. So stop creating as to what is reality. (...) The moment you think about god and heaven, imagination will fly. (...) Life is throbbing inside you; (...) life in its most essential form is happening within you. For anything you want to know about life, for any truth that you want to discover about life, you must look within you – because life is happening right here within you. If you look somewhere else, definitely you will go into more and more illusions. So don't try to fight your illusions – (...)

if you know that it's an illusion, then what is there to fight with? (...) You fight it only because you think it's reality, isn't it? If you see, if you are aware that it is an illusion, it just falls aside – it simply falls there; it's got nothing to do with you. So, if you're a genuine seeker of truth, you don't worry about illusions; you don't split hair – you just go into higher and higher levels of awareness.

The problem with the mind is: if it doesn't have a goal, then it doesn't know how to be intense.

Not being concerned about where you will go is a very, very essential quality if a person wants to evolve spiritually. The moment one sets a goal, one has destroyed the seeking. To seek means that you can only seek that which you do not know; (...) the moment you make a conclusion about anything, you have destroyed the search. (...) You may spend a lifetime believing you're seeking, but actually, you are not seeking – you are just trying to make life agree with the conclusions in your mind, your conclusions as to what the outcome of the search should be. (...) So, don't fall into this trap.

Everything is illusion. (...) You cannot downscale illusion or upscale illusion. (...) The only way is to wake up; there is no other way. It is from this context that they told you that everything is *maya*: because you are living in the mind, because you are living through the mind, you are looking at life through the distortion of mind. So, everything is illusory.

Being human is so significant because you can determine the nature, the quality and the direction in which this life will go. This is in your hands; this is not a small privilege. (...) You don't have to drift here and there because of tendencies. (...) When you're alive and conscious, you can determine the destination. This is the privilege that only a human being holds; this must be exercised with utmost responsibility.

Education, wealth, power, fame, position – anything can become a barrier for spiritual possibilities; but anything can also become an access.

Spiritual process is happening to not even 1% of the population. For all others, when things go well, they are laughing; and when things go bad, they are crying. There are very few people in the world who, whichever way the world is, whichever way life goes, are okay and balanced. For them, nothing is a great benediction, and nothing is a problem – everything is just another life situation through which they can become free. The rest of the people will go the way the situation pushes them; they are like cattle.

The word *mudra* literally means a *seal*; it is a certain position of the hand. *Mudras* are a subtle science of arranging your body in a certain way: the way your system functions can be altered just by changing the positions of your palm; (...) by holding a certain *mudra*, the energies tend to move in a particular way. (...) This is a whole science by itself which essentially involves the geometry and circuitry of the body. (...) There are hundreds of *mudras*: some for health, some for wellbeing, some for creating certain other kinds of processes. For different

aspects of life, there are different *mudras*. In Indian culture, for everything they identified a particular *asana*, a *mudra*, and a particular kind of breathing, so that a human being brings out the best within himself. This still lives everywhere across culture, but it is being practiced without the necessary understanding and awareness.

You lock your energies in a certain way. In today's world, more than ever, the biggest problem that human beings have is the dissipation of energy, because our sensory system is stimulated more than ever before in the history of humanity. (...) In earlier times, for you to hear any sound, a lion had to roar, an elephant had to trumpet, or some other exciting sound had to happen – otherwise, it was silent. Now, there are sounds going on all the time; (...) now, if you turn on the television, you see every kind of color, in rapid succession, to dazzle you all the time – so the amount of sensory input that you are taking in is like never before. When this level of sensory input is there in you, if you sit and say “AUM” or “Ram” or whatever you might think, that will also go on in endless, rapid succession. Unless they create a powerful process within themselves, in today's world, most human beings cannot sit with their eyes closed without daydreaming. That is why a *mahamudra*: it is a seal; once you put the seal and lock it, your energies will turn themselves in a completely different direction (...) – otherwise, your energies dissipate in reaction to various sensory inputs. (...) You get tired after some time, (...) because every time you pay attention to something, you lose energy.

Why we spend so much time to psychologically and emotionally prepare you for a twenty-one-minute practice is to get you to the right level of receptivity.

The only problem with you right now is the cerebral activity. If we take away the cerebral activity, you are peaceful and wonderful – but without possibilities. Essentially, the human problem is just this: people are experiencing their possibilities as problems. (...) To enhance the possibility and still not have a problem with it, this is the uniqueness of *shambhavi mahamudra*.

Gu means darkness; *ru* means dispeller. The function of a *guru*, contrary to popular belief, is not to teach, indoctrinate or convert. The *guru* is here to throw light on dimensions beyond your sensory perceptions and your psychological drama, dimensions that you are currently unable to perceive. The *guru* is here fundamentally to throw light on the very nature of your existence.

Right now, your problem is that you suffer what happened ten years ago; and you suffer what may happen the day after tomorrow. Both are not living truths; they are simply a play of your memory and imagination.

The only solution for all the ills that plague humanity is self-transformation. Self-transformation is not incremental self-improvement; self-transformation is achieved not by morals or ethics or attitudinal or behavioral changes, but by experiencing the limitless nature of who we are. Self-transformation means, nothing of the old remains; it is a dimensional shift in the way you perceive and

experience life. Knowing this is *yoga*; one who embodies this is a *yogi*; one who guides you in this direction is a *guru*.

On the spiritual journey, the *guru* is not the destination, but the roadmap. (...) When you are on unfamiliar terrain, it is just sensible to take directions. On one level, this is all that a *guru* is: a GPS, a pathfinding system.

I am neither modern nor ancient, neither new age nor old age. I am *contemporary*, and that is how every *guru* has always been. (...) Truth is timeless, but the technology and the language are always contemporary. If they were not, they would deserve to be discarded. No tradition, however time-honored, deserves to live on as anything more than a museum piece if it has outlived its relevance.

I realized very early that I knew nothing about anything. That meant, I ended up paying enormous attention to everything around me. (...) Those who destroy that state of absolute borderless ignorance with beliefs and assumptions completely miss an enormous possibility: the possibility of knowing. They forget that “I do not know” is the doorway, the only doorway, to seeking and knowing.

If you really want to know spirituality, then don't look for anything. (...) It is not the object of your search that is important; it is the faculty for looking. The ability to simply look without motive is missing in the world today; everybody is a psychological creature wanting to assign some meaning to everything. Seeking is not about looking for something; it is about enhancing your perception, your very faculty of seeing.

Life itself is the ultimate intelligence; human intellect is mere smartness that ensures survival. (...) Instead of trying to tap into this all-powerful intelligence that pulsates within each of us, we opt to use our logical intellect, which is useful in certain situations, but essentially limited.

Yoga is essentially a way of recreating the body so that it serves a higher purpose. The human body can function as a piece of flesh and blood, or as the very source of creation. There is a whole technology for transforming the human into the divine.

Yoga is the experience of union with existence, of oneness of all life, or boundlessness.

We are all seeking to become infinite; the only problem is that we are seeking it in installments.

In the East, the longing to become infinite has been culturally recognized as the highest goal of all human activity and endeavor. Freedom or *mukti* or *moksha* is seen as the natural longing in every human being and our ultimate destination – it is just because we are unconscious of it that we seek to fulfill it in installments, whether through acquisition of power, money, love or knowledge, or through that other great pastime of today, shopping.

Human desire is not for any particular thing, but just to expand illimitably.

Right now, the simple life process is taking a toll upon humanity: just to earn a living, to reproduce, to raise a family, and then one day to fall dead... – what a challenge! It is amazing how human beings struggle just to do what every worm, insect, bird and any other animal does quite effortlessly. Put simply, our inner ecology is a mess. Somehow, we think that fixing outer conditions will make everything okay on the inside. But these past 150 years are proof that technology will only bring comfort and convenience to us, not well-being. We need to understand that unless we do the right things, both on the inside and on the outside, the right things will not happen to us.

You can bullshit yourself into all kinds of emotional states; you can somehow crank up some well-being for yourself. But the problem is, it doesn't last. (...) Bullshit may get you to the top, but it never lets you stay there. (...) So, as long as your inner life is enslaved to external situations, it will remain a precarious condition – there is no other way for it to be. (...) You just need to see that the source and basis of your experience is *within you*. Human experience may be stimulated or catalyzed by external situations, but the source is within. Pain or pleasure, joy or misery, agony or ecstasy – everything happens only inside you. Human folly is that people are always trying to extract joy from the outside. You may use the outside as a stimulus or trigger, but the real thing always comes from within.

The whole human experience is contained within you; all human experience is 100% self-created – and if your thought and your emotion are of your making, then you can mold them any way you like.

Every kind of pleasantness that we experience, whether peace or joy or ecstasy, is a kind of chemistry. The yogic system has always known this. There is a technology for inner well-being, for creating a chemical basis for a blissful experience. This is one dimension of what I call *inner engineering*.

There is only one way, and that is *in*. (...) The greatest adventure which life has to offer is the journey inward.

Most people think that peace and joy are the goals of the spiritual life. This is a fallacy – peace and joy are not things you attain at the end of life; (...) peace and joy are the basic requirements for a life of well-being.

The spiritual quest is a natural longing; but unless you handle it consciously, it will not yield. When being peaceful, blissful and joyous are not efforts anymore, then you naturally start seeking; then you want to know the nature of life. Mysticism on this planet evolved only in those places where people learned the technology of being ecstatic by their own nature. This is so because it is only when you are blissful that you will be in the highest state of receptivity, truly willing to explore all aspects of life. Otherwise, you would not dare, because if keeping you pleasant is a big challenge, then you cannot take on other challenges.

The moment you make the fundamental mistake of identifying something that is not you as yourself, life becomes an unnecessary struggle. The foundations of peace and bliss are not about attending to the external realities of your life, but in accessing and organizing the inner nature of your being.

Good and bad, god and devil, high and low, sacred and filthy, pure and impure, heaven and hell – once you have fractured this existence within yourself, there is no way to reach a state of enduring well-being and freedom. (...) Once you have fragmented creation like this, there is no way to arrive at a state of absolute inclusiveness.

Whatever we do not want to take responsibility for, whatever we cannot make sense of logically, we label *destiny*. It is a consoling word, but disempowering. To mold situations the way you want them, you must first know who you are – and the crux of the matter is that you do not yet know who you are.

Your mind is just an accumulation of impressions gathered through the five senses. What you accumulate can be yours, but it can never be *you*.

Judgments about good and bad are essentially human and socially conditioned. These are fine as social norms, but existence is not concerned with these conclusions. Existence is not judgmental; it treats all of us the same way.

Passing the buck is what you do in a hundred different ways every day; you have collectively refined the old blame game into a fine art. The quality of our lives is determined by our ability to respond to the varied, complex situations that we encounter. If our ability to respond with intelligence, competence and sensitivity is compromised by a compulsive or reactive approach, then we are enslaved by the situation. This means that we have allowed the nature of our life experience to be determined by our circumstances, not by us. Being fully responsible is to be fully conscious. (...) Reactivity is enslavement; responsibility is freedom.

When you move into the fundamental dimension of who you are, you are beyond all polarities. You now become blissful by your own nature; you are the master of your own destiny.

Responsibility does not mean taking on the burdens of the world; it does not mean accepting blame for things you have done or not done; it does not mean living in a state of perpetual guilt – responsibility simply means your ability to respond. If you see, “I am responsible”, then you will have the ability to respond; if you think, “I am not responsible”, then you will not have the ability to respond – it is as simple as that. All it requires is for you to realize that you are responsible for all that you are and all that you are not, for all that may happen to you and all that may not happen to you. This is not a mind game; this is not a self-help strategy for easy living; this is not a philosophical theory – this is a *reality*.

Human beings are in a perennial state of complaint; they carry their complaints with them like a badge of their identity.

If you retain your ability to respond, your memory of the past will become an empowering process. But if you are in a compulsive cycle of reactivity, memory distorts your perception of the present.

Instead of growing wise, most people grow wounded.

In a state of conscious response, it is possible to use every life situation, however ugly, as an opportunity for growth. But if you habitually think, "I am the way I am because of someone else", then you are using life situations merely as an opportunity for self-destruction and stagnation.

The wealth of life lies only in how you have allowed its experiences to enrich you.

No adversity is an impediment if you are in a state of conscious response, no matter what the nature of the situation you are in – but it can only enhance your experience of life if you allow it to.

Logic is not without its uses, but it helps only to handle the material aspects of life. If you handle your entire life with logic alone, you will end up a mess.

Responsibility is born in awareness; reaction is born in unawareness. Responsibility is born in consciousness; reaction is born in unconsciousness. Responsibility is freedom; reaction is enslavement.

Responsibility is not reaction, but it is not action either. Responsibility and action belong to different dimensions. The ability to respond gives you the freedom to act; it also gives you the freedom not to act – responsibility puts you in the driver's seat of your life. (...) Being responsible means, you are taking ownership of your life; it means, you have taken the first radical step to become a complete human being, fully conscious and fully human.

Limited responsibility is a way of drawing boundaries: what you think you are responsible for will be within your boundary; what you think you are not responsible for will be outside your boundary.

As you move into higher and higher levels of freedom within yourself, life within you reorganizes itself: life is now a wonderful, accelerating journey of self-discovery.

The yogic path is not a path of inherited belief; it is a path of experience, a path of exploration and experiment.

Conscious response brings you to a profound and enduring state of connectedness with life. (...) In this willing, active involvement with life, you are embraced by life, and the embrace takes you to the very source of creation.

And now, yoga. (...) you arrive at *yoga* only when you realize that your desire is essentially for the limitless, and that nothing else will settle you.

Every human being lives in a perpetual state of insufficiency. No matter who you are or what you have achieved, you still want a little more than what you have right now. This is human desire. But the fundamental desire within every human being is for boundless expansion. Most people are not aware of the nature of their longing. When their longing finds unconscious expression, we call this greed, conquest, ambition; when their longing finds conscious expression, we call this *yoga*.

The science of *yoga* is quite simply the science of being in perfect alignment, in absolute harmony, in complete sync with existence. The many fluctuations of the outside world have their impact on each one of us, but *yoga* is the science of creating inner situations exactly the way you want them. When you fine-tune yourself to such a point where everything functions beautifully within yourself, naturally the best of your abilities will flow out of you.

Yoga is the technology of upgrading, activating and refining the inner energies for the highest possibilities. (...) But *yoga* performs an even deeper function than ensuring well-being at body, mind and energy-levels: literally, *yoga* means *union*; when you are in *yoga*, it means that in your experience, everything has become *one*. This is the essence of the science of *yoga*; this is its deepest aim.

The whole process of *yoga* is to take you step by step and stage by stage from the known into the unknown. It is a 100% empirical science: it does not ask you to take anything on trust; it urges you to experiment every step of the way.

There are many stories of *yogis* sitting and moving for incredibly long periods of time. This is possible not because of physical endurance, but because in these states, they are not available to the process of time. They have touched a dimension beyond all the contradictions of here and there, now and then, a limitless ocean of emptiness where there is neither bondage nor freedom – an existence beyond existence.

The body is like an antenna: if you hold it the right way, it becomes receptive to all there is in existence. If you hold it another way, you will remain absolutely ignorant of everything beyond the five senses.

There are two fundamental ways in which the spiritual journey can be approached: you can either go slowly, step by step, accepting all natural assistance available to you; or you can ignore all the steps and take the inward leap. The first path makes involvement mandatory; the second path entails a withdrawal from external life situations. Every human being is free to choose the path more suitable for his or her temperament. In the times in which we live, a balance between the two is usually best.

Being a *Buddha* means that you have become a witness to your own intellect. The essence of *yoga* is just this, to arrive at that moment where there is a clear space between you and your mind. Once this happens, a life of heightened clarity, perception and freedom has begun: this is the birth of freedom.

Morality always differs from person to person, according to time, place, situation, and convenience. (...) What was considered to be moral a hundred years ago is intolerable today; and what you think is good, your children will despise. Your ideas of good and bad are just a certain level of prejudice against life. The moment you get identified with your limited ideas of morality, you become completely twisted; then, your intellect functions around these identifications in such a way that you never see the world as it is. (...) Drop rigid ideas as to what is virtue and what is vice, and learn to look at life *as it is*.

Avoiding something is not freedom from it; such morality is based on exclusion. Spirituality, on the other hand, is born of inclusion.

Unfortunately, all sorts of belief systems are passed off as spirituality today. But genuine spiritual process is always a quest. And there is a significant difference between believing and seeking: believing means, you have assumed something that you do not know.

The intellect is termed *buddhi*; the deeper dimension of the mind is conventionally known as the *heart*. But in *yoga*, this deeper emotional mind is known as *manas*.

Thought is not as intense as emotion in most people's experience. (...) Only 5-10% of the population may be capable of generating the kind of thought that is so intense that there is no need for emotion.

The *path of devotion* is quickest; the *path of knowing* is harder. (...) With knowing, every step you take forward or backward, you know where you're going. With devotion, you have no clue whether you're moving toward your liberation or whether you have fallen into a pit. (...) Generally, for most people, emotion is more intense than thought – that is why devotion has been glorified above all other paths. But without the right understanding and wisdom, walking the path of devotion can lead to all kinds of illusions.

A devotee is someone who seeks to explore and experience life as fully as possible. Devotion is not a dissection of life, but a total embrace.

A devotee is someone who is willing to dissolve into the object of devotion. If you are a devotee of life, you will become one with it. Don't be an outsider to the life process – become a devotee; dissolve.

Yogis are not against pleasure; they are just unwilling to settle for little pleasures, that's all.

A mystic is unwilling to draw conclusions; the rest have glorified their conclusions as "knowledge".

If you want to hit the peak of your consciousness, then discipline is essential. You cannot be partying until early morning and attempt to scale Mount Everest tomorrow. The same logic holds true here. (...) And when you are climbing Mount Everest, you will not take one step sideways, because every iota of energy is needed to reach the peak. (...) Now you would not want to perform any action that would distract you from the main purpose.

Karma means, *action* – (...) action on three levels: body, mind and energy. Whatever you do on these three levels leaves a certain residue or imprint upon you. (...) Depending on the type of physical, mental and energetic actions that you perform, you write your software – and once the software is written, your whole system functions accordingly. (...) The karmic mechanism is ceaseless; (...) you cannot stop it. (...) You are experiencing your karmic impressions and imprints all the time – and you cannot bring these to a halt. (...) So *karma* is not some external system of crime and punishment; it is an internal cycle generated by you: these patterns are not oppressing you from without, but from *within*. (...) You can keep modifying the outer environment, but nothing will work, because you haven't figured out how to change your *karma*. (...) Everything about you is determined by your karmic patterns.

The karmic residue is not a body by itself, but a dimension that occupies the physical, mental, and energy bodies. Addressing *karma* on the physical level is important: it can cleanse the elements, help minimize physical memory, and, through the practice of *hatha yoga*, it can revitalize and upgrade the system. Addressing *karma* on the mental level is also important: it can create a paradigm shift in the way you live your life and inhabit this moment. However, when you address your *karma* on the level of energy, the process is deeper and swifter, and it rapidly accelerates change on all other levels. Above all, it is capable of changing your destination. *Yoga* on the level of the physical body can bring well-being; on the level of the mental body, it can bring joy, equanimity and peace; but on the level of the energetic, it ensures that you are heading only toward your liberation.

Karma yoga has to be approached on many levels – merely working on the levels of the physical and the psychological is not enough. (...) You will still be influenced by the residual impact of lifetimes of experience that lead you by your tendencies. Only if you begin to clean the energy body of karmic content will you begin to move in a new direction. Instead of being ruled by tendencies, you now begin to become a conscious being. (...) Once you transform the content of your energy body, the fundamentals of life will begin to alter: you are now hugely empowered to begin your march toward freedom.

The moment you start stepping into the subtler dimensions of the etheric and bliss bodies, your *karma* cannot touch you. The law of cause and effect can operate only on the physical, mental and energy levels – beyond that, it has no impact. The moment you begin to taste the Divine, your *karma* has no hold over you.

Purification, or karmic burning, is necessary for those who are entangled and compulsive. Without that burning, most people will not be able to meditate. But once meditation begins, the path is no longer about burning; it is instead an illuminating process of creating a certain distance between yourself and your physical and mental dimensions. This is the journey to freedom. (...) So the ideal *sadhana* is a balance between the fire and the light aspects.

Once your *allotted karma* (*prarabdha*) is handled, a certain inner space is freed up within you. This gives you room to perceive life with a certain clarity. You need not work out everything else, because you now see that the entire karmic influence is illusory. Once you have that clarity of realization, it is easy to drop your *karma* when necessary.

Working out your entire *accumulated karma* (*sanchita*) is a very long process, because the accumulation is massive. So do not try to investigate the content of your warehouse; it will take forever to go through, and it might well engulf you! The danger of sifting through your *karma* is that you could well find precious elements that you want to preserve. Just handle the *allotted karma* and make use of the clear space to drop the accumulated karma altogether. The moment you close the retail outlet, the warehouse becomes meaningless. So when the time comes, you simply dispose of the entire warehouse wholesale, with all its content and storage facility.

I have nothing to teach. (...) Teachings will not get you through the many insidious karmic blocks in your life. (...) A teaching, after a certain period of time, becomes a block by itself. (...) You will twist it to your convenience. (...) This is counterproductive, because the teaching is not meant to support you; it is meant to demolish you. Once a teaching becomes a source of convenience, it is no good. This is why a *guru* talks from so many different dimensions that seem contrary: the aim is not to allow you to settle anywhere. The moment you settle, you will start using the teaching to your advantage.

When you start cultivating your energy to access a different dimension, the karmic cleansing is inevitable. This is because the whole karmic structure is being dismantled on some level. With constant practice, the aspiration is to unburn the karmic pot, to dissolve it into pure clay. You are melting the frozen complex of habits and predispositions into pure energy. Only when your energies become this fluid can you sit and meditate. This is because you are no longer a bundle of thoughts and impressions; you are in a state of receptivity to grace.

Suppose you took a little car and attached a powerful engine to it – it could be a disaster. The car would fall apart, not because the engine is bad, but because it is too good. Similarly, if your energy body is greatly enhanced without enhancing the physical body or working with the karmic substance, it is possible that one or the other will collapse. Any attempt to empower the energy body, therefore, must be accompanied by work on every other level. Before people are initiated into powerful *kriyas*, they need to do a rigorous amount of *sadhana*. Without physical practice, people cannot experience the *kriyas* in all their depth and

intensity. When preparing for initiation into powerful kriyas, practitioners must also prepare the mind. They need to expand their set of identifications, to widen their understanding of who they are. When they are reminded that their ability to respond extends to the entire cosmos, not just to a family or community, then that inclusive involvement is far less entangling than selective involvement: (...) the karmic structure loosens considerably. Now it can accommodate a considerable expansion of the energy body. If energies expand when the karmic substance sits tight upon you, you could feel like you are being ripped apart. This can be hugely disruptive to your life. If you are not able to endure it, an enhancement of the energy body is pointless. It is ideal, therefore, to expand the karmic structure in such a way that it is able to withstand the intensity that arises in the energy body during *kriya yoga*.

How rapidly you empty your *allotted karma* depends on how swiftly you are willing to move from one aspect of life to another.

For the *yogi*, the ultimate aim is *mahasamadhi*, or ultimate dissolution of the limited identity. This means a voluntary relinquishment of the physical, mental and energy bodies. There is nothing life-denying about this; it is instead about giving up the limited for the unlimited. (...) A *yogi* of great accomplishment will dissolve most of his karmic load, keeping a small volume that can be worked out just before his final exit.

Those whose limited identifications have dropped away so completely that they are unable to function in the outside world are known as *avadhutas* in Sanskrit. *Avadhutas* are mystics who have journeyed so far beyond worldly consciousness that they turn utterly childlike; they are sometimes even perceived as crazy. They have dropped the intellect so completely that they do not know how to survive in the outside world; so they have to be looked after. Such internal states may not last forever, but they do last for lengths of time, sometimes years. These are blissful and wonderful states, but social situations need to be supportive for people in such conditions, because they cannot look after themselves. Traditionally, however, such people were celebrated in India. There have been *avadhutas* all over the country, wonderful beings who have been revered for centuries after their time.

Is it possible to retain the physical body after breaking the karmic bubble? – It is, but it takes engineering. Since enlightened beings no longer have a karmic footprint, it is very difficult for them to retain a physical form. *Yogis* have various methods to accomplish this; (...) different yogis have created different methods. (...) One option is to perform conscious *karma* to retain the body. (...) Many *yogis* have maintained some simple conscious attachments, for instance either toward a spiritual mission, or toward food – these are simple desires that they can drop at any time.

Every spiritual process is about transforming the animal nature within you. As you move toward a divine possibility, you must take care of your animal nature with the right kind of awareness and inner work. – Merely pretending to be moral won't do. Many human beings who project themselves as very principled

and upright find themselves consumed by their animal impulses, whether lust or greed, later in their lives; they completely lose their grip over themselves in their later years. So dissolving the animal nature is the aim of a daily spiritual process.

I have often spoken of the traditional courtesans in India who wore an extremely elaborate type of jewelry. Their entire body was swathed in gold and diamonds. The jewelry was so complex that the men who came to them, fired with lust, had no idea how to take it off: it was such a dense web of chains that, although they tried hard, they could never get the jewelry off. (...) What these men never guessed was that there was just one pin that kept the whole web of chains together. It was located in a spot that only the courtesan knew. If that single pin was pulled, the entire jewelry would fall off. (...) *Karma* is exactly like that. It is a complex web of chains, some beautiful and studded with exquisite diamonds, some others just ugly rusted iron shackles. It makes no sense to pick the good *karma* from the bad. This is why spiritual seekers are not interested in acquiring good *karma*; they just want to drop the entire mess. This means burning up their *karma* through intense action as well as distancing themselves from their *karma* through meditation. But there is a third way, too – and this entails knowing the location of the pin. (...) If you are able to drop your limited identity, you have annihilated the enormous sense of self-significance that most human beings live with. Now you can dismantle the elaborate karmic chains in one swift single stroke: you emerge from the debris of your *karma* a liberated being. (...) If you ask for the pin to be pulled when you are not ready, it is not liberation – it is escapism.

Traveling the globe can be wonderfully exciting. But at a certain point, one tires of going round in circles. The scenery changes, the weather alters, but there is something deep within a human being that dislikes going in circles. This innate dislike is bound to surface at some time. (...) The thirst for freedom is deeply human; it is not something that the sages invented. It is something far more primal: it is the longing of life for itself. But in order to be free, you need to be willing to drop all investments. You need to reach the point where you are no longer interested in saving yourself. You no longer take incremental steps toward your liberation: you realize that if you take incremental steps to infinity, you become endless installments and never get there. When you see your limited identity for what it really is – a hollow bundle of thoughts, likes, dislikes and prejudices – then you are ready to abandon it. And with abandon, all the shackles fall away: the final pin is unlocked.

If avoiding death is avoiding life, dodging life is inviting death. (...) Once you start dodging life, you are invariably inviting death.

Yogis want to develop their body and their mind because if they are born again, they don't want to be born with small amounts of *prarabdha karma* and go on for many lifetimes. They don't want to postpone it; they want to fast-forward everything.

The whole spiritual path in India has been designed in such a way that the karmic wall does not gather substance. At the same time, you go on enhancing the volume of life that you gather. (...) That is the idea behind structuring spiritual life in a certain way, so that one is constantly active, but it is not about oneself. The moment it is about me, karma will grow; immediately, the karmic wall will gather substance: its walls will become thicker and thicker.

The significance of your life is always determined by the volume of life you captured.

Not everybody who takes to a spiritual process, or *sadhana*, is going to burst into enlightenment. But they are living like that because they are wearing down their karmic bodies. When the time comes, if the bubble becomes incompetent to house genetic memory and evolutionary memory, then it cannot retake another body: embodiment is not possible; it is all over. All of it may not be gone, but the ability of the bubble to come back is over. If you burst the bubble completely, it is possible to completely eject out of this cycle. Then we would not call it death; it is the ultimate end of life. To do this, if it was a big bubble, you simply touch it and it would be completely gone. It does not need much action; simply of its own nature, it can burst. (...) But even when the bubble is small and the walls are thick, if people acquire the necessary wisdom and the intention, or if they are on to very powerful spiritual processes, they can crush it in the present lifetime – they don't have to wait for lifetimes to grow the bubble very big.

We call a death untimely when someone has intent to live, that is, they still have *prarabdha karma* to work out, but suddenly something strikes them down and they die. Their body collapsed when the intent was on full scale – this is an untimely death. If intent itself has gone away, it is not untimely; it is very timely for that life. Chronological age, whether you are thirty-five or sixty-five or ninety-five years old, is not the point. The criterion is that the intent is gone. Then, in terms of life, it is a timely death. I cannot give you an accurate percentage, but I think we can easily say that more than 80% of the people do not die a natural death or a timely death anymore. Their death is unnatural or untimely, because they die while their intent is still on.

Natural death is a good thing for you and a good thing for those you are leaving behind, because you are not being forced out of your body. For this to happen, you need to empty your *prarabdha karma* before your body wears out. How rapidly you empty your *prarabdha karma* depends on how quickly you move from one aspect of life to another. If you are eighty and still think like a teenager wanting to romance someone, then your *prarabdha karma* will not run out.

You can die well only if you accept your mortality.

Ichha mrutyu is not death, but actually the transcendence of the cycle of birth and death. This can happen when a person is into spiritual *sadhana* and has achieved such a mastery over their energies that they are able to untangle their life energies from the physical body without damaging it. The person has understood where the keys to his or her karmic structure are and is able to dismantle it

completely. Such a person becomes truly no more. This is considered the highest kind of death; this is also referred to as *mahasamadhi* in the Hindu tradition and *mahaparinirvana* in the Buddhist tradition. In English, we simply call it *liberation*, meaning one has become free from the very process of life, birth and death; one has become free from the basic structures of body and mind, or free from the karmic structure which holds these things together – (...) one has burst the bubble completely. This is the ultimate goal for every spiritual seeker.

Traditionally, in India, before one marries off their children to someone, they always scrutinize the horoscopes of the two people. They do this because they want to make sure that the temperaments of the two people are compatible. They also want to make sure that their children have a long and prosperous life.

For regular people who are constantly influenced by what is around them, periodic purifications are needed. Otherwise, slowly, inertia will set in. These are not big things; but these small things can slow down people. (...) It is extra weight, that's all. (...) everything suddenly becomes so much more effortful. So it is always best to do some sort of periodic cleansing. (...) If there is strong *sadhana*, one does not have to worry about all these things. For such a person, all these things don't matter.

If you understand the real context of your life, you will only be too glad to be alive.

For the majority of people, this thing about them wanting to end their life is just a lot of drama. Please see: whenever you feel suicidal, it is only because life is not happening the way you want it to happen. Today, if life is not going the way you want it to go, you want to end your life. But if things get a little better tomorrow morning, you will start making plans for the future. By tomorrow morning, if something is going right, you want to live, and you want to live long enough to have your third baby – you even want grandchildren. But when everything looks bleak, you think of suicide. This is a self-destructive game that you are playing in your mind; there is no existential basis to it.

Enlightenment is when all illusions collapse. Right now, you selectively keep some illusions, and some you collapse. If everything collapses, you are enlightened. If you learn how to handle your disillusionment joyfully, then there will be no suicidal thoughts.

In yogic traditions, they say: if a person sits alone in a room in the dark, without lighting a lamp or turning on the light, this means that either they are going to commit suicide, or they are going to become a *yogi*.

In *yoga*, a suicidal tendency is considered the result of an aberration or distortion at the energy level of the person. For such people, only bringing a certain amount of exuberance to their energies will bring them out of it.

If you want to work on the extension of the life of your body, you need to do it with the right kind of *sadhana*, not with outside fixing. If you do the right kind of *sadhana*, when the body is stretched, along with it, the *prarabdha karma* will also open up. It will open up other dimensions of karmic substance, and there will be substance to keep this going. If there is no substance for the being, but there is substance of the body, you will become like a ghost. (...) You will live like a zombie. Without the needed *sadhana*, if you stretch the body, the mind will cop out. You will find many people with still-sturdy bodies, but their mind gone, because they have run out of their *prarabdha karma*. It is like you have the hardware, but you have run out of the software required to run it. These people are unable to open up the next dimension of memory because they have no *sadhana* – that just leaves an empty screen. (...) Without *sadhana*, you have no way of digging deeper into the larger karmic substance, or what you call *sanchita karma*. Such a person will not be able to sustain life-extension.

People think that if they are married, if they have a house and children and if they have tons of money in the bank, they are living well. That is not so. *Living well* means that you have grasped *all* aspects of life. If you have grasped everything that is there to know about life, then you have broken through the bubbles of memory in which you are storing these different things. If it all bursts out in you, you would definitely like to move on to the next dimension. Once one realizes that one is repeating the same thing, one will suffer – one will want to move on to the next dimension. (...) The longing to move on to the next dimension becomes urgent especially if you look back and realize that you have been in the same movie for a long time. This dimension is about *this and that*. In your present state of mind, *this and that*, or *that and that* is interesting right now. But the next dimension is just *this and this and only this*. What is seemingly many will turn out to be One. This may not seem to be interesting to you right now because you can think, feel, understand and project only from the dimension in which you exist. But that is how it is. The sooner you realize that you have been in the same dimension, the more you will long for what is beyond that. Until then, it will seem uninteresting to you.

Samadhi is a state of equanimity where the intellect goes beyond its normal function of discrimination. This in turn loosens one from this physical body: a space between what is you and what is the body is created.

Samadhis have been categorized into eight different types or levels. Of these eight, they have been broadly categorized as *savikalpa* and *nirvikalpa samadhis*. *Savikalpa samadhis* are *samadhis* with attributes or qualities; they are very pleasant, blissful and ecstatic. *Nirvikalpa samadhis* are without attributes or qualities; they are beyond pleasant and unpleasant. Those who go into *nirvikalpa samadhi* states are always kept in protected environments because their contact with the body becomes very minimal: the smallest disturbance, like a sound or a pinprick, can dislodge them from their body. These states are maintained for certain periods to establish a firm distinction between oneself and the body. It is a significant step in one's spiritual evolution, but still not the ultimate.

Samadhis by themselves have no great significance in terms of Self-realization, or knowing the true nature of the Self. Many of Gautama the Buddha's disciples went into very long *samadhis*; they did not come out for years. But Gautama himself never did so, because he saw it as unnecessary. He practiced and experienced all the eight kinds of *samadhis* before his enlightenment and discarded them. He said, 'This is not it. This is not going to take you any closer to Self-realization. It is just moving into a higher level of experience, and you might get more caught up, because it is more beautiful than the current reality.' – If your goal is set, if you have made Self-realization the top priority in your life, then everything else which does not take you one step closer is meaningless.

If sudden enlightenment happens, most people may not be capable of withstanding it – it may cause either death or absolute introversion.

Every creature in the world, except man, seems to know how to die gracefully. (...) They all know when it is time to die, so they withdraw to a quiet place and die gracefully. It is only the human being who is oblivious of this and dies in a manner that is becoming increasingly graceless. When death comes, people who did not know how to live will definitely have problems with how to die.

During youth, when the body is vibrant, it is very difficult to make yourself aware, because you are so identified with your body that you don't see anything beyond that.

If you establish yourself in other dimensions of experience, the body becomes an easy thing to handle. Old age and even death can be a joyful experience. For this, you need to know when to leave and exit gracefully.

Essentially, the idea of wanting to build a home came because the children cannot endure the outdoors. (...) People build homes, in the first place, because a human child is not designed to grow up outdoors completely. Unlike other animals, it takes some time for a human body and mind to get to a certain level of maturity. We have seen this happen here: a mother elephant delivered a calf near the Isha Yoga Center gate. She just stood there around the baby for three days and, after that, both of them just walked away into the jungle. This is a natural thing for them; but this is not the case with a human child. A human child needs a few years of nurture and protection. So we did some things, like building a home, for this protection. And then, we put in more and more protection: we became overprotective and super-overprotective – but that is a different matter.

A family, or a home, means a lot of over-organization of life for today, tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. When you live at home or with your family, you will get sucked into it. This connection with other bodies and the over-organization of life will create an enhanced sense of the self in a person – this will make it very difficult to let go of things. Moreover, if you die among the family, you will die with a huge sense of attachment. (...) If dying in nature is not possible, the next best option is to withdraw from everyone that you know, particularly relatives and close friends. It is best not to have anything around you that reminds you of the life that you have lived. Set aside your relationships and whatever

runanubandhas that you might have. Even gods and goddesses are not necessary, because that also is *runanubandha* – a relationship that you have created. If you have built sufficient awareness, the best way to go is that no one attends to you. If you have not built the necessary awareness, then you may feel terrified when the moment comes. You may want someone to hold your hand; it is all right. If not in awareness, you will leave at least with a little bit of love or comfort. It is okay, but you should keep this to the minimum.

After a point in life, one should make an assessment of one's situation at every stage in life. (...) every once in a while, after every stage of your life, it is good to reexamine one's situation: it is good to check how relevant you are to the situation around you, what your priorities in life are, and whether it is time for you to withdraw. And moving into *vanaprastha ashrama* is not about you going to die; it is to live your life with a certain kind of awareness and preparation, so that death can happen in the best possible manner. This is not an invitation to death, but a profound acceptance of the human condition.

In the Indian way of life, we say, you have three choices for living. You can live as a *bhogi* or a *rogi* or a *yogi*, but you can die only as a *yogi* or a *rogi*. A *bhogi* is one who is lost in material or sensual pleasures; a *rogi* is one whose life is contained by suffering; a *yogi* is one who has achieved union or harmony with existence. You can live in any of the three states, but for dying, there are only two choices: you can either die as a *rogi*, or as a *yogi* – there is no choice of dying as a *bhogi*. At one time, in this culture (India), a large number of people chose to die as *yogis*. But today, they are all choosing to die as *rogis*. There is a whole industry that has come up for this – maybe they feel that they have to support it. Currently, in the United States, a disproportionately large number of healthcare interventions are being done in the last thirty days of human life. Why do you need so much intervention at that stage? This effort is not for well-being, as this results mostly in torturing people to the extreme, knowing fully well that they anyway have to die soon. So before those last thirty days, let us say, six months prior to that, you decide to taper down your life and leave. This is the most sensible way to conduct your human nature.

To decide to run the body down consciously is neither suicide nor euthanasia. This is about being so aware that you know when life has completed its cycle and you walk out of it. This is about developing sufficient awareness to separate yourself from the physicality that you have gathered. In that level of awareness, one can leave. If you do not attain such a level of awareness, then the least you should do is to make the last moment very graceful, pleasant, joyful and blissful for yourself. This can be done if you manage certain things beforehand. If none of this is possible, then at least one can take the decision not to choose excessive medical intervention. This will be good for you, and good for the planet. Modern societies are getting more and more obsessed with extending the human lifespan at any cost. You must understand that not everyone is geared to live for 100 to 105 years. If you want to do that, you must calibrate your life in so many ways. Unfortunately, for most of these millionaire immortality-seekers, all they have known in their life is the pleasures of the body, the joys and pains of psychological drama, and the intoxication of power in the world they live in. All

of this being physical, they have not looked beyond that dimension at all. Today, with advanced medical interventions – hormones or supplements or stem cells or whatever – they are only managing to somehow keep the body alive. When people have run out of their software, but their hardware is still on, they will become like empty shells. There are too many such empty shells in the Western societies now.

If you are ninety and still romancing someone, that is considered a great thing. It is not considered a stupid, idiotic thing, because that is all many people have been habituated to. (...) You see how pathetic it is? But this kind of thing is celebrated in today's society. (...) This kind of situation would not have arisen if, like all other creatures, human beings knew when and how to die gracefully. (...) One person may be very strong at 85; another may have to leave at 70 – it depends on many factors; chronological age is not the criteria. To know this with some certainty, one needs a certain amount of *sadhana*, or insight into life. Then you will know when infirmity is coming; you will know when your body is becoming unstable; and you will feel that you have completed your *karma*. Otherwise, you feel lost in this world, which, unfortunately, is the state of most modern people.

Just as you make efforts to live, you should also make efforts to prepare to die. You should decide: *in case I die, I want to die like this*.

If you want to die well, you have to cultivate a certain amount of dispassion towards your own death. Otherwise, one will go struggling, kicking and screaming – which will not be good for what is going to come next.

Essentially, spirituality means putting your life on fast forward. You may suffer much more because everything happens at a fast pace. What you would have stretched for ten years happens, let us say, in one month. So the intensity of the suffering that you go through is extremely acute. There may be moments of ecstasy and joy, but there is so much suffering also happening rapidly within you. (...) Emptying one's *karma* leads to all experiences happening at a tremendous pace. (...) To support this process is the purpose of every consecrated space. (...) Kashi, the Dhyanalinga – (...) in such places, life will happen better, and death also will happen better.

The significance of being a human is that you have the ability to discriminate and choose the course of your life. If you don't employ that, then you are not much of a human being.

Sadhguru on the *eight limbs of yoga*:

The 8 branches of yoga:

- 1) *Yama*: external protocols
- 2) *Niyama*: internal protocols
- 3) *Asana*: posture
- 4) *Pranayama*: breath
- 5) *Pratyahara*: withdrawal of senses
- 6) *Dharana*: attention & concentration
- 7) *Dhyana*: meditation & contemplation
- 8) *Samadhi*: transcendence

The eight limbs of yoga (ashtanga yoga, as it is known) are structured in a particular way: the first three limbs (*yama, niyama, asana*) are considered to be the fire aspect and are purificatory; the last four limbs (*pratyahara, dharana, dhyana, samadhi*) are considered to be the light aspect and are enlightening. The fourth limb, *pranayama*, is considered to be the intermediate transitory step, combining both fire and light.

Yama and niyama are simple guidelines, the dos and don'ts on the spiritual path, such as nonviolence, commitment to truth, not stealing, not hoarding wealth, purity, cleanliness, practice, and so on. They create the right atmosphere for one's spiritual evolution. Once a person is enlightened, these dos and don'ts are of little relevance. When compassion within you is overflowing and divinity has come to the fore, no rules need to be prescribed: human nature at this point knows exactly what needs to be done in a given situation. But these simple moral structures were identified for the benefit of those starting out on the path.

Asanas are the many physical *yoga* postures practiced by the seeker in a certain state of awareness. They are a way of manipulating your inner energies in a particular direction, a way of kneading the body toward a higher possibility. (...) *asanas* are about elevating consciousness by thoroughly kneading the body. (...) the science of *yoga* journeys from the outer to the inner, reminding us that working consciously on the physical level can alter the way one thinks, feels and experiences life, and can ultimately lead one to higher spiritual possibilities.

The fourth limb, ***pranayama***, entails consciously working with *prana*, or life energy. It is the intermediate stage of both fire and light, because it is both purgative and enlightening in nature.

Pratyahara, turning inward, is a particularly important limb of *yoga* and is most challenging in modern times, when the world is more distracted by external stimulation than ever before. It entails looking at even the physical and the psychological as external accumulations and spells a complete withdrawal from body and mind.

Dharana is constant unbroken attention toward the inner, based on the premise that whatever you pay unwavering attention to is what you become connected with. In an age dominated by electronic media and a virtual epidemic of people diagnosed with attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, this limb, too, is more challenging than ever before.

Dhyana is a state of immersion, or meditation, when there is no longer a divide between you and the inner world (to which you have paid attention during *dharana*): two have now become one.

In the final state, ***samadhi***, one has dissolved into nothing. There is absolute equanimity, because the discriminatory mind has subsided. The beyond now makes its presence felt.

Sadhguru on *chakras* & *prana*:

Whatever you do in life, how your body, your mind, and your whole system function is ultimately determined by your *prana* or *vital energy*. *Prana* is an intelligent energy. Since *prana* has the karmic memory of the individual imprinted on it, it functions in each person in a unique manner. By contrast, electricity does not have memory or intelligence: it can light up a light bulb, run a camera, and do a million other things, not because of its intelligence, but because of the particular device that it powers. In the future, there may be smart electricity too. If you manage to imprint energy with a certain memory, you can make it behave in a certain way.

Chakras are energy centers. Although most people have heard of seven *chakras*, there are actually 114 in the body. The human body is a complex energy form: in addition to the 114 *chakras*, it also has 72.000 *nadis*, or energy channels, along which vital energy, or *prana*, moves. When the *nadis* meet at different points in the body, they form a triangle. We call this triangle a *chakra*, which means *wheel*. We call it a *wheel* because it symbolizes growth, dynamism and movement; so even though it is actually a triangle, we call it a *chakra*. Some of these centers are very powerful, while others are not as powerful. At different levels, energy centers produce different qualities in a human being.

Fundamentally, any spiritual path can be described as a journey from the base *chakra*, called *muladhara*, which is located at the base of the spine, to the crown *chakra* called *sahasrar*, which is located at the top of the head. This journey or movement from the *muladhara* to the *sahasrar* is from one dimension to another. It may happen in many different ways, and various yogic practices can affect this movement.

The first *chakra* is *muladhara* (earth). (...) *Muladhara* is really made up of two terms: *Mula* means the *root* or *source*, and *adhar* means the *foundation*. *Muladhara* is the very basic foundation of life. In the physical body, your energies need to be in the *muladhara chakra* to some extent; otherwise, you cannot exist. If the *muladhara chakra* alone is dominant, food and sleep will be the predominant factors in your life.

Muladhara means *the foundation*. If the foundation of our physical structure is not stabilized, then one will not know health; one will not know well-being; one will not know a certain level of being stable and complete. And these qualities are very essential if you want a certain human being to make an effort to climb high: one who is shaky on his legs, you cannot make him climb a ladder; only one who is firm on his legs, you can ask him to climb – and he is *willing* to climb, because there is a certain assurance in his legs. Assurance is not just in your mind; assurance is in your body also. This assurance is needed for one to walk through this planet efficiently and in a capable manner. If you're a little unsteady on your legs, you wouldn't want to walk; you would want to sleep. Only when you feel steady on your legs, you want to walk. (...) One fundamental aspect of *muladhara* got referred to as *kayakalpa*. That means either establishing the body,

to bring stability to it, or extending it. *Kaya* means *the body*; *kalpa* essentially means *a certain unit of time which is very large* – an eon; let's say, a millennium. So you want to make the body last for a millennium or for an eon. You want to take charge of the fundamental ingredient in the system, which is earth. To be able to get the earth into the system, to be able to get the juice of life into the system, you are stabilizing a liquid into a solid state, like mercury. This means, you stabilize many aspects of this body which naturally deteriorate with time; you stabilize them in such a way that this deterioration has slowed down to such a point that it looks like you're ageless and timeless, that you have a *kaya* which will last out a *kalpa*. (...) The entire effort of various aspects of *yoga* or *sadhana* is to move the pineal gland a little down, a little south: the third eye comes down between the two eyes. If this happens in a certain way, the secretions of the pineal gland can be taken to strengthen the system and increase or extend the longevity of the system; or this *amrita* can be taken to create blissfulness in the system – like a drug, it can just blow you away. Or you can use this *amrita* to enhance your perception, so that you can become like thin air, because everything that is here passes through you. Then you become 100% transparent; that is so because you have used your *amrita* to bring sensitivity to the system. So these are the three fundamental ways: one is to strengthen the body, to make it like a rock, which will give a certain longevity to that person, which is considered superhuman by most people; or to bring such a level of drunkenness and blissfulness within you that you don't care how long you live; or to make yourself like thin air, that your perception is super-hyped, because there is absolutely no resistance in the system. The same secretion of the pineal gland can be used in these three different ways, and *kaykalpa* largely uses it to strengthen the body, to extend the longevity of the system. (...) This *amrita* will play the right kind of role in the system only if it enhances your perception, because *if you do not enhance your perception, your life doesn't get enhanced in any way*. It only gets enhanced in somebody else's eyes. If you become like a rock, your experience of life may not change; it is just other people who think that you are fantastic. If you have a rock as a brain, you will always be thinking: "which is a bigger rock than you? which is a smaller rock than you?" – your entire life goes into this, as to which is superior, which is inferior, which is better, which is worse. Endlessly, you will be comparing yourself, because this is the nature of a rock. Once you identify yourself with physical reality, "which is better? which is worse?" is a natural process of thought. And it is only if you transcend that identification that you can be free from this thought process as to which is better and which is worse. (...) When one masters one's *muladhara*, either it can move to a very stable body, or a certain drunkenness of experience, or heightened levels of perception. So, *muladhara* is very important for your existence. But a human being knows, only a human being can know – no other creature is aware of that. So, just existing is not good enough; something else needs to happen.

The second chakra is *swadhishtana* (water). If your energies move into *swadhishtana*, you are a pleasure seeker. The *swadhishtana chakra* is located just above the genital organs. When this *chakra* is active, you enjoy the physical world in so many ways. If you look at a pleasure seeker, you will see that his life and his experience of life are just a little more intense compared with a person who is only about food and sleep.

Swadhishtana means *the abode of the Self*. If one has used *muladhara* for stability alone, the *swadhishtana* becomes a very strong abode of regeneration and pleasure. If one has used *muladhara* for drunkenness, then *swadhishtana* becomes an abode of a certain sense of bodilessness, which cannot be compared to becoming like thin air, but there is a little distance, because when the abode of the Self is established in a higher level of pleasure than the rest of the body, then there is a little bit of separation, a certain sweetness of the Self – the body will be a little loose on it. This will give a certain freedom from physical drives that human beings tend to have. If one has used *muladhara* to heighten their perception, then *swadhishtana* also functions in this way and further enhances that possibility, because when energies are dominant in *swadhishtana*, one becomes far more alert to life around. (...) *Swatantra* means a technology of the Self, a way to become free, because the biggest bondage is in the way we reproduce, and the urge for reproduction binds people in body, mind and emotion. So *swatantra* means that you have found a *tantra* to release the Self from these kinds of troubles or compulsions, because now your Self is totally free. If your *swadhishtana* is established in a certain way, your ability to create, at the lowest level, is purely reproductive. At the highest level, you can create a god if you wish; one can establish what is considered a divine entity. Many who created divine entities generally felt that creating one divine entity was good enough: they gave it all and they left with it, or they gave it all and became dissipated because of that. Some retained the possibility of doing more. Only if all the other dimensions are on, one can deliver a god. You can deliver a god, and still live, and still maintain potency only if all the other six are equally active. Only then can one do this. To keep this body alive, healthy and capable, you have to invest a certain amount of energy. (...) Among all the things that you can do with your *swadhishtana*, the most significant thing is just this: that you can deliver a god – an energy which works at a higher level than you. If one has brought their mind to a state of unquestioned focus towards something, then it becomes a possibility that you could consecrate that body to a very high level of function, like a divine entity. But the worst calamity that has happened to humanity is this: they cannot stay focused on anything; the mind keeps on moving from here to there to get something better. So one dimension of *swadhishtana* is also this, that you strive to take *swadhishtana* above its natural compulsions, which are essentially regenerative. Sexuality has no purpose of its own other than reproduction, even though people are using it to bind themselves to each other. If you want to go beyond the cycles of life, transcending these dimensions becomes important. This use of *swadhishtana* is a very complex and a fantastic process. It can be done with rituals, by using the body or by using pure energy (the lower, the middle or the higher). Of all the things which we can do in this system, *swadhishtana* is among the most complex and beautiful ways of doing things. But it is also a dangerous way of doing things, because if you do too much of it, you may have your Self, but you may lose your body – a beautiful Self, but no body, this may happen to you if you go too much on it or if you lose control over it.

The third *chakra* is *manipuraka* (fire). (...) If your energy moves into the *manipuraka chakra*, located just below the navel, you are a doer in the world: you are all about action; you can do many, many things.

Manipuraka is the maintenance center. What is fundamental to the body, what is regenerative, these two things together generate life. *Manipura* just maintains. This is important, because whatever you create, if you don't maintain it, it will be gone. (...) When stillness comes, your ability to move the *manipura* becomes tremendously enhanced. Once you move *manipura*, it is important that you keep your body very still. (...) If you move a sound to your *manipura*, this will spread right across the system and the very body will reverberate this sound. (...) The first three *chakras* constitute in many ways the physical dimension of the body. They are the most essential, whether one wants to live physically well, mentally well, emotionally well, or energetically well, or to enhance one's capabilities of living on this planet. The other four *chakras* are of a different nature.

The fourth *chakra* is *anahata* (air). (...) If your energies move into the *anahata chakra* (air), you are a creative person. A person who is creative in nature, like an artist or an actor, is someone who lives very intensely – more intensely, perhaps, than a businessman, who is all action. The *anahata* literally means *unstruck*. *Anahata* is located in the heart area and is like a transition between your lower *chakras* and your higher *chakras*, between the *survival instincts* and the *instinct to liberate yourself*. The lower three *chakras* are mainly concerned with your physical existence. *Anahata* is a combination; it is a meeting place for both the *survival chakras* and the *enlightenment chakras*.

Anahata is symbolized by two intersecting triangles forming a six-pointed star, with a dot in the center. This is a symbolism as to how the lower three *chakras* and the higher three *chakras* are all meeting here as one; that means, it has six qualities in one. All the seven *chakras* have merged here in a certain way: the upward moving triangle and the downward moving triangle have met. (...) This is the nature of the Creation: every creature is trying to rise to its fullest potential. Some will do it consciously, most will do it unconsciously, but everybody is trying to rise – this is the nature of life; this is Creation. This desire to rise has come because you are stuck in one place, and you have to move, and you think that of all the directions, going up is better. If you are not geostatic, if you are not stuck in one place, if you are everywhere, then there is no place to go; you soak everything that's around you. In this context, yogic symbolism has used the two triangles: the creature is trying to come up; the Source or the Divine is trying to come down. *Anahata* is a place where both have intersected, in proper alignment, forming a six-pointed figure with a central point. What this means is, this has many possibilities in one place. If there are too many possibilities in one place, it is also a place where most people miss all possibilities, because there are too many things happening; there are too many choices and too many confusions. In order to do *anahata sadhana*, two things are needed: one thing is sweetness of emotion; another thing is absolute steadiness of the intellect – there must be a discernment between what is real and what is not real; what is memory and what is imagination; what is experience and what is psychological stuff. If this discernment is not there, then *anahata* is not the

place to go. Because this is the place where you hear and see things in a way that even a reasonably stable person can go crazy – somebody who has a little tendency towards craziness will go all the way. *Anahata* means *the unstruck sound, the sound without reverb*. This means that if you simply sit in silence, you start hearing things; all kinds of sound will happen. When you start hearing things, generally it means that you are going crazy. Hearing things is considered as the first sign of psychological imbalance. And it is – because those who are psychologically imbalanced in some way also become perceptive in some other way: one dislocation enables them in some other way. This kind of enabling is not good for you. It's like a child who has just begun to walk; if you put him in a marathon race, then for sure, he is going to damage himself. So it is not that it is a bad thing – too much of a good thing, when you are not ready for it, or when you are no good for it, it's a bad thing. This is why, before you hear anything, your discernment must be crystal clear, and your emotion should be sweet. Without joy, without sweetness of emotion, there are too many things which you cannot do; without sweetness of emotion, you are denying yourself the universe. Only when you have mastered the emotions to become very sweet no matter what, now going into different explorations is fine, because otherwise, if you go into *anahata*, you see something, you hear something, and you become terrorized – yes, truly terrorized.

The next *chakra*, the fifth *chakra*, is *Vishuddhi* (ether), which literally means *filter*. *Vishuddhi* is located in the area of your throat. If your energies move into *Vishuddhi*, you become a very powerful human being, but this power is not just political or administrative. A person can be powerful in many ways. A person can become so powerful that if he just sits in one place, things will happen for him – he can manifest life beyond the limitations of time and space.

Vishuddhi essentially means a *filter*. If you become active in *vishuddhi*, then one dimension of this is: you become occult competent; you have accessed other ways to function. If one's *vishuddhi* becomes active, these kind of energy capabilities will come through with which one can create many things. This is very important if one wants to transmit and transform the situations around them; then, having a certain capacity of the *vishuddhi* is very, very important. But if one is focused on *vishuddhi*, it's a little hard to fit into the social structure. (...) This is one thing which will happen once the *vishuddhi* is active: disembodied beings will naturally move towards you. *Vishuddhi* is something which we usually skip, because one who is looking for realization does not need to go through all these works. But one who wants to explore the technologies of life, one who wants to transmit, one who wants to become capable enough to be able to hold and be some kind of repository for the future, that one has to go through all this. For one who wants to just realize, it's not necessary. When one becomes focused on *vishuddhi*, one will develop a blue colored aura. Blue body means, an activity or a dynamism with sweetness of emotion and discernment of the mind. Because if too much sweetness of emotion happens, you don't want to involve in the world; you're just fine the way you are. And if discernment of mind, intellect, comes to such a point that you see everything distinctly clear, then you don't want to involve, because there is nothing to involve, what is there to involve? So you become aloof; you have nothing to do with anybody. See, between *anahata*

and *agna* is *vishuddhi*. Only if your *vishuddhi* is active, if you're blue-bodied, then you can be in sweetness of emotion, and then you have the discernment of mind: then, you can play the world whichever way you want and still not be touched by it; then, you are in a different kind of love affair... not with anybody, not with anything – the word *love* does not anymore indicate somebody or something to you.

The sixth chakra is agna (light). (...) If your energies move into the *agna chakra* (light), located between your eyebrows, then you are intellectually enlightened: you have attained to a new balance and peace within you; the outside no longer disturbs you – but you are still experientially not liberated.

Aгна means, it is the *source of knowing* (third eye). This is discernment to its highest point; this is colorless light – we're calling it *white light*, but actually it's colorless, because you don't see it. Colorless light, if it's broken down, becomes seven colors. Similarly, the seven *chakras* are a representation of seven colors, but *agna* is colorless. It is because of this colorless light that you are seeing everything clearly the way it is. So, if one is established in the *agna*, you see everything just the way it is. And when you see everything just the way it is, you may completely lose interest in everything. (...) The level of freedom it gives you when external things do not decide what happens within you is tremendous. The amount of energy you have to invest in things that matter within you is phenomenal, because outside things do not matter to you – because you've seen it just the way it is. (...) So, once you start seeing everything just the way it is, if you have not counterbalanced that with sweetness of emotion, you can't be involved in the world. You just look at everything, and nothing means anything. This is very important. Otherwise, if just pure discernment comes, you cannot involve yourself in life – because you see through. Clarity is not everything. – Just by itself, clarity will create disinterest; clarity will create aloofness; clarity will create withdrawal from life. If you see everything just the way it is, you will not want to play the game. To see everything as it is, and to still play the game, you need sweetness of emotion; you must be dripping with ecstasy within you – then, it's okay; it doesn't mean a damn thing, but still you play.

The seventh chakra is sahasrar (space). (...) If your energies move into *sahasrar*, at the crown of your head, you become ecstatic beyond all reason. You simply burst with ecstasy for no reason whatsoever.

The *sahasrar* is total madness. The moment energies touch *sahasrar*, without any reason, you drip ecstasy. *Sahasrar* is not a path, a demarcated way, an established way. To demarcate, you need a physical space, but *sahasrar* is not a physical space. One cannot be into *sahasrar* for too long, for that is not a space where one can hold on to physical body and exist. As ecstatic and fantastic as it is, it is not a living space; it is a going space. When somebody stays there for too long, then things will happen; the body won't hold. If you are floating around in ecstasy, you cannot work in that condition; you cannot manifest something in that condition – you cannot be functional in those states. And even if you're functional, you're not very effective. It's a fuzzy world between physical and non-physical. Those who start inhabiting in *sahasrar*, they won't be here for long;

they'll be gone. (...) There is a tinge of ecstasy always, but one is not immersed in it. Sometimes one goes into it, but otherwise, there is always a tinge of ecstasy. If there is not this tinge of ecstasy, one cannot sit simply here without any need to do anything outside, without the need to pursue pleasure or fulfillment. That means, you're mildly buzzed out. If you're fully drunk, then you will be useless – useless in terms of the world, not in terms of life. In terms of activity in the world, you could become incapacitated. But with a tinge of ecstasy, you can do any amount of things, and still feel like you have done nothing. You can either dance or work or create something without burdensomeness, because there is a tinge of ecstasy. If you're well established and there is a tinge of ecstasy, it's fantastic; but if you only seek that, it may become a little bit too fantastic. You go to *sahasrar* because you want to get lost, not because you want to find yourself – when you want to find yourself, you need to be on some path.

Chakras have more than one dimension to them. One dimension is their physical existence, but they also have a spiritual dimension. This means that they can be completely transformed into a new dimension. If you bring the right kind of awareness, the same *muladhara* that craves food and sleep can become absolutely free from the process of food and sleep. If one wants to go beyond food and sleep, one needs to transform the *muladhara* to an evolved state.

To move from *muladhara* to *agna*, from the lowest of these seven *chakras* to the second highest, there are many procedures, methods and processes through which one can raise his energies. But from *agna* to *sahasrar*, from the sixth *chakra* to the highest *chakra*, there is no path – you can only jump there. In a way, you have to fall upward. So, the question of going step by step to that dimension does not really arise; there is no way. It is for this reason that spiritual traditions have emphasized the significance of a *guru's* role in one's realization. *Guru* literally means *dispeller of darkness*. You can only jump into an abyss – the depth of which you cannot know – if you have an absolutely insane heart, or if your trust in someone is so deep that you are willing to do anything in their presence. Most people, due to a lack of either of these two aspects, just get stuck in the *agna chakra*. When this happens, peacefulness is the highest state they will know. It is only from this limitation that there has been so much talk about peace being the highest possibility. But for someone seeking their ultimate nature, peace is only the beginning; it is not the ultimate goal.

Prana is the physical dimension of the subtlest manifestation of life. It is still in a formless state. It has the intelligence of life; otherwise it could not form life. (...) If you read the basic map of one's *prana*, you know their past, present and future – everything. It is like an energy x-ray. Because in a way, our life is just a manifestation of our energies; that's how we function. (...) Socially, it is true, your memory seems to make you look better than others; but existentially, your memory is crippling you. This is why somebody said, "Those who stand first here will stand last there; those who stand last here will stand first there", because what seems to be smart on the social level is working against a human being at an individual level – which he never understands. So your social smartness, your success in the world, you handle it with a certain distance. It is needed for us to live, but we don't have to make that our qualification. These things should allow

us to live a little bit better in the world, and that's all. This should not determine who I am – but unfortunately, for most human beings, that's all that determines who they are within themselves. This is what we call *karma*: the memory that you have restrains and directs your energy in the way it functions.

If people have their own thought processes attached to everything that happens to them, it is better that correction happens slowly, in degrees. Unless they are in a state of surrender, if correction happens too dramatically or suddenly, people will get disturbed by that. If they are in a state of surrender, you can just correct them, quickly.

For most people, the *sahasrar* does not exist; it is yet to manifest. It's a closed road. Once the *sahasrar* opens up, physical life becomes fragile. To hold the physical body with you when the top end is open, it needs a certain skill and a certain support; otherwise, one will leave. So usually, with 90% or more, the moment of enlightenment and the moment of leaving the body is the same. That is where *hatha yoga* becomes all important. If one has not established his body in a proper way, then what is a great blessing also ends his life: the greatest blessing will become the end of who you are. As far as that life is concerned, if it leaves, then there is really no problem; it's wonderful to leave. But if it reaches that point and stays, it would be very useful for every other life. If you touch the *sahasrar* without establishing the other *chakras*, you will not be able to be stable in your body. So, establishing and stabilizing the physical body is very important. (...) The seventh *chakra* is not for people who want to live. If you go there, you cross the borders of physicality. And if you want to go there and come back, you need a certain disposition – otherwise, you will leave. So *hatha yoga* is largely concerned with the five *chakras* in the center. The *muladhara*, we are only trying to stabilize and close it; we are not trying to enhance it. The foundation does not need to do anything; it just has to stay there, that's all. We are trying to enhance only the five, because it's these five which sustain life. If *muladhara* connects you with outside life, then your life will become very topsy-turvy. Strengthening the base powers is a sure way of ensuring that no spiritual process will ever happen to you. Once you connect with life from the downward trend of your body, then you cannot connect with the upward moving forces of your life structure. So we want to seal the foundation, and we don't want to hit the top; we want to just stabilize the five in such a way that, when some day we hit the top, our body is so stable, it can hold it and experience it, not fuse out. (...) These five *chakras* are associated with the 108 remaining *chakras*; these five handle all the 108. So it is these 108 we can work with; it is with these 108 that we can enhance and transform. The base one, we just hold it stable; the top one, until we have sufficient mastery over the five *chakras*, we should not touch *sahasrar*.

If your energies are in a certain way, either you must do phenomenal *sadhana* to correct that, or you better go that way. So if there is phenomenal will in a person, or if there is devotion, a sense of surrender, then whichever way you are, it can be fixed. But if you don't see that will, that commitment, that devotion and that sense of surrender, it's better to go by the patterns of your life. (...) If you have an airplane with a weak engine, you don't take off and go against strong winds. In that kind of weather, you better go with the winds; that's safer for you. But if you

have a very powerful engine, you don't care about the winds; you anyway take off. Similarly, if a person is of extraordinary will, or if he's willing to give up his will, we can take him where he wants to go. But if he's half, then the trends are important; then we have to observe the trends, where he should go and where he should not go: he should not attempt something that he cannot do and break himself up.

If you want to know life upon this planet, the nature of life upon this planet, the nature of anything physical upon this planet, not necessarily animate, even inanimate, the best thing is to look at *this one*, because *this one* has incorporated all of it in its making.

How fluid you are makes you that much more flexible in the way you operate. If the *muladhara* is properly fixed, one gets tremendous freedom to play around with the remaining five *chakras* in whichever way you want. All the 108 *chakras* can be moved.

If your *chakras* are just stuck in one place, then that's all you can be. But if you can move your *chakras* around, you can rearrange; if you can move them around, then there are many things that you can be. In every place, you are a different kind of person, because if you are just one kind, you can do only one thing. In different situations, to perform different types of activities, to perceive different dimensions of reality, you need to be a completely different life process. So *hatha yoga* is not just concerned with the flexibility of the muscle – it is concerned with the flexibility of the whole system, so that your energy body should become mobile. (...) You know, when a potter takes a certain volume of clay, the most important thing is the kneading: how well the clay is kneaded, that is how easily you can form a shape. So, in a way, *yoga* means *un-burning yourself*. Right now, *karma* is like burning the pot into a fixed shape. *Yoga* means un-burning it, so that you can redo the pot every day if you want; you're un-burning it; you're taking it back closer to the source of Creation where it is not rigid anymore. So, as existence allows you more freedom, always there is a bigger price to pay. So if you enter *yoga* as an experiential process, existence is giving you a certain license – now this has to be handled with more responsibility than anything else. These small things can cost in an enormous way for the individual human being if he does these things wrong. So, before we handle life energies: our mindset, our attitude to the whole thing – this is extremely, extremely important. If you ever forget this, you will see that *yoga* will work against you. This is the nature of existence. You better understand the laws if you want to explore the larger scope of existence; otherwise, it's best to limit yourself to small things. If you enter a new space and if you don't know the rules, it will be disastrous. Right now, you're enjoying the effect of *prana* – it's keeping you alive; it's keeping you going. But if you want to be the cause of your *prana*, then it's a completely different dimension of competence, which every human being is capable of, but which has to be earned – it doesn't just fall upon you. *Hatha yoga* is a good way to start off – making the body stable, being able to handle things. If you have to learn these things, it's an endless process. If you realize these things, it's great, but that is a wild shot. If you become a good receptacle, it can be put into you – that is the easiest way; that is the most probable way.

Kundalini is not the name of a particular energy; *kundalini* is the description of a certain practice. Getting your latent energy out of the pit, this is *kundalini yoga*. A massive amount of energy is in the pit – you also have it, but it is not yours yet. If you dare to open this, you must be ready for many things; you should not be concerned about your life. Because if this grabs you from the inside, everything will evaporate; nothing matters. So *kundalini yoga* is for those who have no interest in life around them. After they master it, maybe they can play with life. But when they're on it, they have no interest in anything around them. Their only interest is, they want to go and explore the pit where life is coming from, back to the womb. Going back to the womb means going back to the place where you were manufactured. (...) If you dig out a certain type of energy, what would happen in a certain span of life will happen very rapidly in your life. So *kundalini* is that dimension; one should not meddle with it unless one is truly, truly competent.

When your attention is really intense, you can download the whole cosmos into *this one*. (...) If you do not build an appropriate physical system and a psychological makeup, you cannot be attentive. (...) You must make yourself into attention, always.